

The polymath of Prussia

By Hugh Lloyd-Jones

PAUL H. SWERT:
Wilhelm von Humboldt
 A Biography
 Volume 1: 1767-1848
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Mark Pattison took Joseph Schlegel, who died in 1805, to have been the last man to be acquainted with virtually the whole body of knowledge available in his time; others have claimed this for Leibniz. But a century later, when knowledge had enormously increased, the brothers Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt covered between them almost the entire territory. Wilhelm's new biographer thinks that Alexander, the scientist and explorer, is the more famous; but for those interested in the humanist Wilhelm is a most important figure.

His career falls into three sections. First, after an elaborate education and a brilliant start to his career in government service, he left that service to devote eleven years to self-education; during that period he made himself into a proficient classical scholar and produced a series of writings about politics, culture and education that did great effect. Second, in a political and diplomatic career that lasted from 1802 to 1819, he played an important part in the Prussian resistance to Napoleon and in the debates of the Congress of Vienna; Tolstoy thought him one of the three or four most distinguished statesmen with whom he had had contact. During this period he re-organized the German school and university system in such a way that they became the models for advanced education everywhere; he took the leading part in founding the University of Berlin, which set the pattern for the universities of the world. He also found time to produce valuable written works, dealing for the most part with the history of language, and, between his retirement from the Government in 1819 and his death in 1859, he made an incomparable contribution to linguistics; apart from detailed investigations of the Basque, Sanskrit, Chinese, Malay and Indonesian languages, he produced theoretical discussions of the subject whose influence has been enormous and is not exhausted even now. The play of intelligence, writes George Steiner of this work, "the delivery of particular notation, the great flow of argument which Humboldt exhibits give the writer

ings on language, incomplete though they are, a unique spine". Steiner classifies Humboldt with Plato, Virgil, Coleridge, Saussure and Roman Jakobson as one of the very few who have said anything about language that is both new and comprehensive.

Humboldt had a most varied and interesting life, which brought him into contact not only with politicians and diplomats but with many of the most eminent writers and scholars of his time. He was intimate with both Goethe and Schiller, as the exchange of some remarkable letters testifies; he could discuss the classics with Christian Gottlob Heyne, F. A. Wolf and Hermann Vitellius on an equal terms; he was at home in political and literary circles in Paris, Rome and Madrid. His extensive correspondence is of great interest; the letters between him and his remarkable wife Anne fill seven volumes.

Between 1903 and 1936 the Berlin Academy brought out seventeen volumes of Humboldt's collected writings. In 1956 Rudolf Pfeiffer wrote that he was less read than his importance might lead one to expect. It is not that Humboldt's writing is obscure or dull for it has the lucidity of much pre-Raphaelite German. But Pfeiffer is right in saying that it lacks charm; he seldom, except in the letters and the official memoranda, ventures a memorable phrase, and the high level of generality which, despite his mastery of details, is his discourse maintains, strains the attention of the reader. Access to his writings is easier than when Pfeiffer wrote, for in 1963 Marianna Cowan published a selection from it in English translation under the title of *Humanist Without Portfolio*, and the following year Walter Flamer brought out an excellent selection of the author's letters in German. The German edition of the letters, which set the pattern for the universities of the world. He also found time to produce valuable written works, dealing for the most part with the history of language, and, between his retirement from the Government in 1819 and his death in 1859, he made an incomparable contribution to linguistics; apart from detailed investigations of the Basque, Sanskrit, Chinese, Malay and Indonesian languages, he produced theoretical discussions of the subject whose influence has been enormous and is not exhausted even now. The play of intelligence, writes George Steiner of this work, "the delivery of particular notation, the great flow of argument which Humboldt exhibits give the writer

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perhaps, incidentally, but clearly and pleasantly; and he shows a sure and solid judgment. He is a classical scholar, as we learn on page 22, when he calls Aristotiles and Polydeus "Aristodemus" and "Euthydemus", because he has learnt of their existence from Humboldt's juvenile collection of texts of Plato and Xenophon bearing on Providence and immortality; rather a high proportion of the rare errors in this beautifully produced book occurs in classical names and quotations. But so far this deficiency has handicapped him less than one might expect and he has produced a learned, enjoyable and useful book.

From 1767, two years before his brother Alexander, who is rich and aristocratic Prussian family, Wilhelm lost his father at the age of eleven, and was brought up by tutors chosen by his mother, an intelligent but chilly lady of Huguenot descent. The tutors were well chosen, and the two gifted boys made phenomenal rapid progress. In Berlin they moved in lively intellectual society, largely Jewish; the beautiful and intelligent Henriette Herz and Moses Mendelssohn's gifted daughter Brendel were among their friends. A short stay at the University of Göttingen brought them into contact with Heyne, at that time the leading classical scholar in the country. Heyne's fame has been unfairly eclipsed by that of his pupil F. A. Wolf, who rebelled against his master, but as F. Klingner has pointed out, Heyne was the first to enter the comprehensive notion of the study of the ancient world which was to become general during the nineteenth century. In Heyne's hands that study was directed to a humanistic end; but at the same time he insisted on proper attention to detail, and his influence must have helped to protect Humboldt against an excess of theorizing.

At twenty-four Humboldt entered government service, and in one year was thought to have gone as far as the ordinary competent official might have gone in six. Then upon becoming engaged to the brilliant and beautiful Maria von Scharffenberg he asked to be relieved of his official duties, and devoted the next eleven years, from 1791 to 1802, to the endeavour to perfect himself. The concept of *Bildung*, the systematic "formation" of one's character and intellect, was then popular among German intellectuals, as W. H. Bruford's studies help to show; and at all times Humboldt felt an urge to stimu-

late and reflect on life in general. In particular he wished to improve his grasp of Greek antiquity, whose study he thought to be the instrument of education that could help him most. In 1792 he made friends with F. A. Wolf (1759), who had been a professor of Halle since 1783 and was to publish his famous contribution to the Homeric Question in 1795: the two men's influence upon each other was profound. In 1794 the Humboldts moved to Jena, where Wilhelm spent three years in daily contact with Schiller and saw much of Goethe. The period between 1798 and 1801 was spent chiefly in Paris, where he met Rousseau and made friends with Sieyès and M. de Staël, and made two excursions into Spain, which were to have notable results.

Humboldt started by subscribing to the general attitudes of the German Enlightenment as they had been developed by Leibniz and by the more moderate Kant, and in later years he made a careful examination of the work of Kant, as some of his linguistic writings show, but on the whole he remained faithful to his early principles. He did not reject religion, but felt it to be a matter of indifference, so that he was strongly opposed to the enforcement of Lutheranism by the Prussian state; some critics have complained that his humanism lacked a religious element. Arriving in Paris soon after the fall of the Bastille in 1789, he sympathized with many aspects of the Revolution in its early stages; but in the thoughts on constitutions which the new French constitution stimulated him to write down in 1791-92 we find a distrust of the operations of "mere reason" and a respect for organic development that recalls Burke. His essay on the limits of state activity, written in 1792, was withheld from publication by its author, partly because of new developments in France and partly because of the appearance of a German version of Burke's *Reflections*; it was not published until 1851, but then it was powerfully influential. Mill's *Essay on Liberty*, Humboldt, with his strong belief in the right of the individual to develop his own nature without interference, wished to restrict the powers of the state to those required for the maintenance of security; as Matthew Arnold noted, he wished to use state action to curb the individual to make him more virtuous. Professor Swert is right to say that some elements in his theory would be acceptable even to socialists and

anarchists. Later, when he returned to the Prussian educational system, Humboldt was to show himself to use state power without restraint to carry out his own purposes.

Other writings of this time are concerned with *Bildung*, which Humboldt saw as a development of human powers (*Kräfte*) designed to save man from becoming enslaved to his inner self; so that the concept of *Bildung* is an anticipation of Marx, Mauguin and Rousseau. As a result, critics seem to have failed to notice that Humboldt must have been a very different person from the dry and rigid rationalist of the day and the coldly logical philosopher he is called. His insistence that the human mind is not a tabula rasa, but that it is shaped by the environment, is a feature that separates his view of the mind from that of Wundt, who had died in the year before his birth.

This point is firmly made in what Humboldt modestly called a "sketch" concerning the study of antiquity, which was sent to Goethe and Wolf early in 1793. It was not published until 1896, but had a small influence on Wolf's account of antiquity (*Das Altertum*), a work which had a great effect. The ideas which it contains were to be developed further in two important productions of the years 1806/07, as we shall see presently. During the early 1790s Humboldt worked at Greek, taking great pains with some translations from Pindar and Aeschylus. His translation of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, though not published until 1816, was begun in 1796, and Goethe was in possession of an early draft in 1799. 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By Martin Gilbert

NORMAN ROSE:
Vansittart
Study of a Diplomat
318pp. Heinemann. £7.50.

Norman Rose is a young Israeli historian who has already published two books on Zionist history. He has now written a biography of one of the major British diplomatic figures of the past century, Robert Vansittart. Underpinned by the meagre personal papers at Churchill College, Cambridge, Rose has worked his way through the riches of all archive collections, the State Papers at the Public Record Office, and has found there, in the Cabinet and Foreign Office papers, much previously unpublished material. This carefully justified a book to follow on from the Colin Vansittart in the Office, published thirteen years ago.

Already loving France, and hostile to Germany, at the age of twenty-one Vansittart passed out top of the Foreign Office examination, having shown both literary as well as diplomatic ability, and what Norman Rose describes as "a deeply emotional and histrionic personality". Unfortunately, not a single private letter seems to survive either from these formative years, or from Vansittart's early years as a diplomat, serving in Persia, Tientsin and Cairo. This is a serious loss to any biographer. The first Vansittart document which Rose quotes from the PRO dates from when his subject was twenty-seven years old, and even then no further Vansittart letters or dispatches seem to exist for the next four or five years of his career.

Another serious gap which Rose has had to contend is the lack of material for the period leading up to the outbreak of war in 1914, when Vansittart, then in his early thirties, was at the centre of affairs at the Foreign Office. As Rose has discovered, to his end our loss, no real clues appear to survive as to Vansittart's detailed ideas and commitments on the unfolding events at this time.

As for the effect on him of his work in the Prisoners-of-War department during the war itself, we are told that the reports reaching him

in his department were "savage", affecting his later attitude to Germany. But we are not told what these reports actually said.

It was as Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office between 1930 and 1938 that Vansittart flourished. For these eight years, Rose gives a vivid picture, not only of high policy, but of Vansittart's own moods, and of his private life.

Vansittart's hostile reaction against Nazi Germany was the high point of his career. Rose has much important new detail on this, the most controversial period of Vansittart's career, as well as on Ethiopia and the Hoare-Laval pact, where his researches have been substantial, and the evidence is impressively pieced together.

Rose tells the diplomatic and disarmament stories of 1931 to 1935 in two separate chapters, each spanning the same period of time. This method, in my view, does not fully succeed. For Vansittart and his colleagues, foreign affairs and disarmament were a single story, and to separate them is, at times, to blur the issues. Thus Rose describes, and puzzles over, Vansittart's support for the Anglo-German naval agreement in June 1935, twenty-five pages before he tells us of his alarm at British defence weakness in March 1935. Might not part of the answer to the puzzle have emerged by putting these two episodes in their correct chronological sequence?

For so thorough a researcher, Rose is, at times, somewhat reticent. In one footnote he refers to "a blistering attack" by Vansittart on Lord Lothian, after the latter's visit to Hitler, but he gives no indication as to the content of the attack. Those familiar with the archives may also feel that Rose plays down at times the part taken by others in advancing the cause of which Vansittart was so strident a champion. Working under Vansittart at the Foreign Office were both Michael Cresswell and Ralph Wigram, whose long and perceptive minutes often lay behind Vansittart's own memoranda. They could have perhaps received greater recognition in these pages.

Both the layman and the expert will find much of value and interest in Rose's chapters on 1935. I myself have eagerly consulted Volume 5 of the Churchill biography, from Rose's researches, which revealed that Vansittart had

successfully instructed one of his officials, Reginald Leeper, to make use of people outside the government in publicly defending the League of Nations and the system of collective security. One of those whom Leeper contacted was Churchill himself. Anthony Eden also added his initials to this plan. As a result, Churchill formed a "ginger group" of people from all political parties and walks of life, which served to challenge the government's policy from outside, just as Vansittart challenged it from inside.

Many of Rose's quotations are extremely interesting; Vansittart's description of Hitler, after his meeting in Berlin in 1935, is worth reproducing in full: "an amiable, simple, rather shy, rosy-faced, bourgeois, with the fine hair and thin skin that accompany extreme sensibility, a man of almost obvious physical integrity, very much in earnest, not humorous, nor alarming, not magnetic, but convinced of a veritable mission and able to impress himself so strongly that he impressed himself on those around him, perhaps I should say even on those constantly around him."

Rose tells us that Vansittart left Berlin after his visit of 1935 "with better hopes" than when he had arrived. But the hopes soon vanished, leaving Vansittart a voice so violent in its anti-Germanism that he was soon excluded by others, and as war approached, found himself a victim of a flood of false hope at a time of personal and international despair. The extent of Vansittart's isolation is made admirably clear in this biography, as are Vansittart's later, sadder, unfulfilled days during the war itself, and afterwards. As Rose shrewdly comments: "Supremely confident in his own powers, he was an uneasy servant to lesser men."

After the war, as Rose shows, people continued to find Vansittart's exhortations embarrassing. Rumours, he believed, "is possessed by the lust of world domination". British policy should be "uncompromisingly anti-totalitarian". Human rights should be upheld behind the Iron Curtain where the communists "violated every canon of fairness and humanity before our eyes in the field of justice". Even today such views would make him an awkward ally. But he spoke the truth as he saw it, and feared no man.

From Bradford to Bohemia

By Charles Davidson

WILLIAM ROTHESTEIN:
Men and Memories
Recollections 1872-1938
Edited by Mary Lago
263pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.95.

Sir William Rothstein has retreated to the periphery of the Edwardian art world. He was neither a giant like Sargent to thrust himself upon our attention, nor a dwarf of the Academician type who could at any moment be taken up by the press. He might indeed have slipped from obscurity into oblivion were it not for his presence in "Maximilian", a satirical magazine, one of the "pioneers" of the "Bohemian" readers' support. Rothstein's protégé, Augustus John, a full-scale biography, "Félicité de Holroyd", may conjure Rothstein's back from the shadows. It might have fallen to Mary Lago to have written it (the 1962 biography by Robert Speaight having seemingly vanished without trace); with Karl Beckson she has already edited Rothstein's correspondence with Beerbaum. Instead, she has edited and abridged Rothstein's own three volumes of memoirs.

Rothstein was born in Bradford of German-Jewish descent, but by religion Jewish. He early had a talent, or at least a facility, for drawing, and this led him to take the train from

Bradford to the Slade, with much the same feelings as a few years later characterized Augustus John on the train from Bradford to Mogadelen. The Slade led to Paris and the Julian Academy, a world which seems to have changed little between the era of Tilly, or even La Vie de Bohème, and the outbreak of war in 1914. A world in which to have been young was very hard, and Rothstein lived long enough to express the nostalgia:

"From the rue de l'Université, I could walk into the rue du Bac and see again in recollection, Whistler's little Empire house, with its apple-green door, its dining room full of old silver and long tables, Whistler himself, self-decidedly holding a copper plate, touching it with his needle while he talked. There Mallarmé would come, and Holroyd, and Augustus John, and the Spaniards, and the first met Walter Sickert. Nearby, in the rue des Beaux-Arts, Fantin had his studio. . . . Fantin in baggy clothes and list slippers, with a shade over his eyes, half French, half English, half Bohemian. And there were the pigsticker at Montparnasse, where Verlaine sat with Carls, and at the Café d'Harcourt, with Stuart Merrill, Jean Moréas and Raymond de la Taille, all now departed."

One would need the soul of a caterpillar not to be entranced by this Bohemian of long ago. It was not only in Paris that Rothstein thrived, and grew, and greened. As a member of the New English Art Club, as an inhabitant of Chelsea, all the world was open to him. With luck, Dr Lago will now edit a companion volume of Rothstein's pictures.

The embattled artist

By William Feaver

RICHARD CARLINE:
Stanley Spencer at War
232pp. Faber. £9.50.

The Memorial Chapel in trim, red-brick, typical Hampstead Garden Suburb, typical Georgian style, is a village of Burglery near Newbury. You get the key from one of the flaming alms-houses. Inside there's a rack of postcards and National Trust brochures, an altar with vividly brass cross and candlesticks and, all over the walls, ten-hung soldierly portraits.

Troops fall out, dig in, bed down, and to, forage, fast, camouflage themselves, suffer injuries, enter hospital. They die and resurrect, emerging dazedly somewhere near Kalliova on the Serbian border, casting aside barbed-wire coils, reporting forthwith to Christ the Quartermaster Sergeant, each man banding in his cross.

Stanley Spencer is omnipresent: an eager hospital orderly, scrubbing floors, dealing with laundry, serving tea. Out on the Main Front, as a private in the 7th Royal Berk, he wanders through encampments observing group behaviour and, tidily-minded as always, bayoneting stray pages of the *Indian News* and stuffing them into a sock.

The Burglery paintings rank Spencer five years to execute and longer still to compose from memory. The project only became feasible in 1924 when Louis and Mary Beland decided to provide him with the custom-made chapel. The last picture was finished in 1932. Almost immediately after he took with him to France. Eventually, he married her and, fired with the notion of a bifocal if not bignous marital arrangement, attempted to use his first wife, Hilda Cuylline (later of Richmond), into some form of remarriage. All this counsel going in his north-Cockney and more to the point, did his art no good.

The completion of the Burglery murals thus marked the end of Spencer's "most fruitful period". That is Richard Carline's opinion and, on the whole, it seems justified. For after Burglery the murals produced at the expense of visionary recall. The excitement of coming upon places that, to him, evoked biblical events (the Fall of Jericho in Meadfield, the Via Crucis in Cookham High Street) was more or less replaced by a frenetic need for sexual arousal and for the form of writing in twined rump and Mother's Union pile-ups. There are plenty of exceptions (among them the generally underrated straight Berkshire landscape) but few would dispute that the Burglery Chapel was Spencer's greatest achievement. It is the centrepiece of Stanley Spencer at War.

The book is, however, far more than a war record. It represents Spencer's progress from childhood to divorce. Stumbling along like a drunken mascot (at 4 foot 10, he was perpetually cast as the Little Fellow, a Chaplin of sorts) Spencer believed he suffered more from misadventure than from misadventure. His pluck was mistaken for eccentricity. His epistolary was, he believed, deliberately ignored by his

superiors at the front. The murals enabled him to put things straight, place himself in history and to present the view he claimed he once overheard an officer express: "Understand, Spencer is no fool; he is a damned good man."

And so he was, if not always in Camberley terms. Richard Carline's remarks from Spencer's voluminous papers that read better, on the whole, than those included in Maurice Collis's *Stanley Spencer: A Biography*. They have been less tidied, corrected and compressed. Take the description of the night



"Hilda, Unity and dolls" (1937), from the exhibition of work done by Stanley and Hilda at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery in London until October 28.

before an engagement with Bulgarian troops in the Verdun valley. Collis's extract reads: "Then two o'clock came, three o'clock approached, and no one seemed to be preparing for anything. I began to look about me from where I lay on my ground sheet like a bird that feels morning is near." Dawn came. They were told they could have if they liked. "My spirits revived as I did so and as the sun rose." Carline (indulently with more space all told) gives the full Spencer flavour:

"But 2 o'clock came and no move; but 3 o'clock approached and no one seemed to be preparing for anything. And I began to look about me from where I sat on my ground sheet rather like a bird that feels morning is near. Then I saw men writing about dividing in dark vertical streaks the crack of dawn light. The disappearing night seems to take my dread with it. It was a clear dawn and I remember we were all told if we liked to have we could. My spirits revived as I did so and as the sun rose."

Spencer's prose was non-stop, like his pictorial scheming and his conversation. It was as though he had claimed his territory by writing in it. Spencer's progress from childhood to divorce. Stumbling along like a drunken mascot (at 4 foot 10, he was perpetually cast as the Little Fellow, a Chaplin of sorts) Spencer believed he suffered more from misadventure than from misadventure. His pluck was mistaken for eccentricity. His epistolary was, he believed, deliberately ignored by his

light all sorts of artistic discoveries.

This is hardly an exceptional statement (what else can art grow from?) but it does encapsulate Spencer's peculiar universality of recall. The description of himself out lying but shivering like a bird on a ground sheet has that touch of exaltation that distinguishes a Spencer image from, say, a contemporary Henry Lamb or Paul Nash or, indeed, a Mulholland Rose image. And, as Richard Carline repeatedly emphasises, what Spencer experienced at war became part of what he felt about Cookham, Hilda, Burglery and, on Official War Artist work in 1941, shipbuilding on Clydeside. Add to these motifs the bit players—the Mayor of Maidenhead, Professor Tonks, the fearsome sergeant—and the background reading of the Bible, *The Canterbury Tales*, *Pickwick Papers*, Marvell, Blake, and (when deprived of all else) Pynchon, and Spencer's blend of the mythic and the mundane takes on a surreal zest. He wrote as he painted: "I remember in a dim way standing stiff in the company of hundreds of men out on the vast plain of green lawn in front of the building and noticing the great spout of white steps . . . lined either side with men—sergeants, NCOs or men. At last a single figure trim and neat, gloves, Sam Browne, appeared on top step in centre, a smart-looking young officer apparently." Picture the scene, enter on it, slightly and it becomes one of his Visitation or Adoration or Judgment Days.

"All the time he writes, he seems to be going on, on, on and your head swims and you say to yourself: 'For goodness sake, stop! But you can't; you must hear this man out.' That is Stanley Spencer telling his sister Florence what he thinks of Dostoevsky. Others said much the same of him. Carline recalls his repeated 'What I mean to say is' droning through the bedroom well as he talked to Hilda, hour after hour, wearing baggy trousers in the painting, his gravelly took the form of paterfamilial, his world creep over his compositions applying details, fascinated by pebbles, blossoms, herringbone weaves, old-fashioned florals. Like Dickens, he often resorted to anapestic pulchritude.

It is wrong, however, to see Spencer as an odd man out, an eccentric bobbing about on the quicky fringes of the solid body of British painting in the 1920s and 1930s. His enthusiasms were those of his contemporaries. Giotto, Breughel, Donatello, Fra Angelico were his masters. He recalled a dream once in which he was walking on Cookham Moor and met Signorelli standing. Carline says, "like his figure of 'Anti-Christ' in Orvieto Cathedral. Signorelli greeted him with a smile, saying: 'Good evening, Spencer.' I liked your picture in the New England'."

These anecdotes displaced Spencer when Carline wrote it up in 1929 in an account of his brother-in-law's work. For one reason and another that book was abandoned. Fifty years later Carline had a free hand and the combination of his careful observation and Spencer's obsessive writing is, in fact, a tedious specimen of New England as a picturesque soxman, nor as the awful husband of Porcie France (who, one must conclude, treated him far worse than he treated her), nor as the Cookham Wonder, the artist who painted the Burglery murals was the most endearing, most daring, most whole-hearted of his generation.

Synopsis

The lines are down between us. It's no use
To shout. We may as well
Add up the gain and loss.
Rule off the entry, and get out.

Or shall we try a new scenario?
The man preoccupied but ogling;
The woman calm, but otherwise engaged,
And both of them placating, kind and fair?

Scratch under the veneer: there's more veneer.
We touched wood once, but it's no longer there.
Cry *salut* qui peut:
New vendors, start from here.

Connie Bensley

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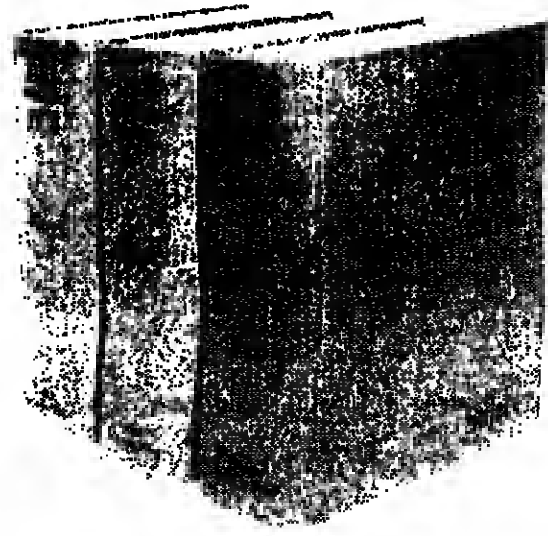
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Piranesi's posterity

By Joseph Rykwert

GEORGES BRUNEL (Editor):
Piranesi et les Français
Colloque tenu à la Villa Aldobrandini
12-14 mai 1976
61 pp. Rome: Edizioni del Bulzoni,
1-70,000.

The title of this book may seem unpromising; even in this biennial year of his death we think of Piranesi as an Anglo-Saxon property. Originally, all those Grand Tourist mullers brought back volumes or packets of his vedute to decorate countless country-house staircases or guest-rooms, only this view was later overtaken by the quintessential Romantic one, which led De Quincy to describe the Carceri as Gothic bulls. All this time he was seen lurking somewhere in the background of the Adam style, which was thought to be a purely insular invention and not what it really was: a spent and scolded-down (if brilliantly organized) version of Piranesi's own fin-de-siècle devices.

For all that two centuries have passed, Piranesi is still very little known as a designer even if "architectural Veneto" is how he chose to describe himself. I would perhaps reproach the contributors to this volume for not having done enough to put this injustice right, though in general the interpretation offered by the 1976 exhibition (which went under the title of the conference of which this volume is a record) seems to me much closer to Piranesi's own idea of his achievement than the conventional Anglo-Saxon estimate.

In spite of all the connections he never came to Britain: nor did he go to France. But he did set up his studio in Rome at the Capitol end of Corso, opposite the French Academy, and it became a place where a number of the Academy's pupils, especially the more quirky and impressionist ones, used to assemble. Several of them worked with Piranesi, all seemed to have enjoyed the conversation there.

It was about this time that there began in Rome that amalgam of high seriousness, archaeological pedantry

and a devotion to inductive reasoning which in later years came to be called Neoclassicism, with which Piranesi's work has no intimate but a tenuous connection. As the time of the French Revolution his ruins, implicated in the republican movement in Rome, poked up their father's photos (and their own, since they had also become engravers) and moved the whole enterprise to Paris, where was to remain for a while, not altogether happily, at one point the stock of plates had to be pawned. On Francesco Piranesi's death in 1810 the whole patrimony, both plates and drawings, was in confusion; Piranesi-Diogo brought them from his doctors and issued the plates for ten years after which Pope Gregory XVI bought them back and lodged them in the Roman Chalcography. It was fitting that the pope who created the Etruscan and Egyptian museums in the Vatican should also honour Piranesi's heritage in this way, since much of Piranesi's work had been concerned with vindicating the Egyptian-Etruscan heritage of Rome against the now-forgotten advocates of Greek superiority.

Piranesi's polemical writings and plates have been recently republished and much discussed—but his motives and his way of working remain obscure. Many of the essays in this book—such as those by Werner Oechslin—grapple directly with the problem; others are more oblique, such as that by Silvia Passarelli, whose short account of Piranesi's monumentalism is one of the best. The individual essays vary, as contributions to this kind of book must do, from the fascinating and/or useful to the irritatingly pedestrian or ineffectually benevolent.

This anthology has the edge over many of its kind, however, in that it offers, in addition to the essays, an extremely interesting group of documents. The editor gives an account of the relations between Nicola Giamberini and the Papal printer-publisher (a builder and two printer-publisher) who were respectively the dedicatee and the distributors of Piranesi's first collections of engravings. They were also closely allied with a proto-Jacobin group which centred round Cardinal Passionei and Giovanni Buttafuochi. Moulque Mosser and Gilbert Broutat deserve our gratitude equally for providing the first

reliable and complete text of the grand life of Piranesi, and for setting out the circumstances of his writing. Legend and reality are both duly noted, and the master and father-in-law, Cristoforo, Roman associates. Although he became a relatively successful architect (the Governor's Palace in Naples), Legend is mostly remembered for having played second fiddle to Robert Adam (over the Spill Palace) and to Thomas Jefferson (over the designs for the Virginia Capitol), as well as for having his portraits pillaged by Charles Canina for Tsar Nicholas.

In his life, he suggests that it was Cristoforo who chose the Piranesi for his unfortunata villa Napoleonica, but this tribute to his father-in-law only heightens the irony of the hero, Piranesi. The life was indeed, as now seems, an introduction to a vast enterprise: of issuing the complete works of Piranesi together with great deal of new material (the Spill Palace, the Near East, together with the unpublished remains of Cristoforo's great work on French antiquities) to form a museum-encyclopedia of world architecture.

The extended text of such a history was never written, nor was any systematic re-ordering of the Piranesi plates carried out. When they were reprinted the plates were always sold individually or bound in the original order, and Legend's intended history of architecture was limited to a preface for a one-volume architectural history which J. N. L. Durand had proposed for his students at the Ecole Polytechnique, and which became a standard handbook for many decades. This aborted publication would have been too rich—in every sense—for the architecture which developed in the nineteenth century.

The documenting of this enterprise seems to me crucial, therefore, if we want to understand some of the great changes of the period, and this alone would make the present book essential reading for architectural historians. But the later doings of Piranesi's successors are a dark and fascinating episode about which one would certainly like to hear a great deal more: about their curious relation to Gustav III of Sweden, for instance. But that will keep for another conference.

Edward Wasiolek, after much valuable work on Dostoevsky, has now written one of the best books on Tolstoy in recent decades. This may be in part because of his preoccupation with Tolstoy's most challenging contemporary, and the resulting sense of the unlikely in a common pursuit. But there are other, more personal reasons. Few studies of Tolstoy have been so carefully pondered and so firmly organized to convey, and not merely show the flexibility and variety of its approach. Wasiolek proposes an essentially simple and consistent reading, but he advances it with subtlety and discretion. No previous critic really satisfies him; he is not ungenerous in allowing the merits of his predecessors, but alert to their frequent inaccuracy. The introduction, though apparently confident—"I have read Tolstoy's fiction as I believe he wanted it read"—nonetheless makes no claim to have established a final answer. "It is a mystery—rich and inexhaustible—that Tolstoy offers us and it is a mystery that I have pursued."

Mystery would not have occurred to many readers as the key element of Tolstoy's art. He was from the very first an incorrigible explorer; he laboured to make his style perspicuous; and in those late years, the work and attitudes of which are bound to modify our sense of the major fiction before him, he tried to understand some of the great changes of the period, and this alone would make the present book essential reading for architectural historians. But the later doings of Piranesi's successors are a dark and fascinating episode about which one would certainly like to hear a great deal more: about their curious relation to Gustav III of Sweden, for instance. But that will keep for another conference.

Merzhkovsky in 1902 suggested a conflict of two Tolstoy's, the scrupulous pagan and the tormented, which had enough truth in it to inspire a great deal of thinking about Tolstoy ever since. But Merzhkovsky did not perceive that both these ideas of Tolstoy were present from the start. Belief in an apparently simple truth, which will sustain happiness, never ceased to inspire Tolstoy. He was convinced at all times that human beings could attain to a "right" relationship with the world. He begins in his first story, *Childhood*, to search for the connection between "inner" and "outer" nature, between the self trusting to its own perceptions and the world as it is, a kind of "touchstone" by which to test them. 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father. He does not press the view as definitive, but it supports his conviction that multiple readings of Anna Karenina are possible.

When Tolstoy resumed writing fiction after a ten-year interval he began a new career. "In some respects," Wasiolek says, "greater than the first," and the new art he created was different, but "just as beautiful and just as powerful". John Bayley considers *Memoirs of a Madman* to be perhaps "the most impressive story, in terms of his own theory of art, that Tolstoy ever wrote." Wasiolek thinks it superior to *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, and gives *Memoirs* a chapter to itself, with more space than *Resurrection* gets. The two other works from this period to be reissued are *The Kreutzer Sonata*—as awkwardly salient in Tolstoy's oeuvre as *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in Lawrence's—and *Ivan Ilyich*. Surprisingly when the latter tale is so severe in its outline, multiple approaches can be made, and with an amusing virtuosity Wasiolek offers a psychoanalytical reading, a "refined Marxist analysis" of "illusions" in a cannibally culture, and even a "formalist" exercise growing out of the first sentence in *Ivan's* history: "Ivan Ilyich's life had been the most simple and the most ordinary and therefore the most terrible." But the fundamental point in this chapter is that the "special conditions for perceiving truth have now changed". No longer will "bopple" and absorption in sense be adequate. It is in death alone that one can find brotherhood. Tolstoy

has now come to contend with Father Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov* that "the roots of sensuous things lie in other worlds".

For all his beauty and power, the art in this later fiction is constrained by Tolstoy's quarrel with himself. He saves the "mythology" in a fresh application: it is still the self, absorbed in its own essential freedom, that can attain the truth, and Wasiolek does well to remind us that Tolstoy's deepest concern in *Resurrection* has little to do with class conflict. The real source of corruption lies in the heart. But the solutions that Tolstoy imposes are biased and unconvincing. Ivan Ilyich's spiritual rebirth, his emergence from the bog, has in been taken on trust. The husband in *The Kreutzer Sonata* kills his wife not so much because of her assumed infidelity as out of shame that his own relation with her has been sexual. Maslova in *Resurrection* rightly rejects Nekhlyudov because she is no longer "his to ruin or to save". And she understands that redemption can come only through a return to their beginnings, not the time of the first unpremeditated kiss but the time earlier still of primal innocence and solitude. She prefers to unite with Simonov because his interior in her is fraternal, not sexual.

Brotherhood in *Resurrection* comes with the individual and not with the community. The "special thread" in Tolstoy's thinking has not been broken. But it certainly comes under strain, when the tone of his late fiction (apart from the very last, anomalous story, *Hadi*)

Murat) is ostensibly Christian. Wasiolek maintains that in the parable-like *Memoirs of a Madman* Tolstoy "has, of course, deliberately misled the reader," and we are not to take Vassily's action in throwing himself on the half-frozen Nikita to warm him as the Christian sacrifice Tolstoy would have us think it. Vassily is concerned rather with stifling his own terror by clinging to the comfort of another man's presence in the blizzard. So the story should be seen as "very subversive" of Christian belief, and the image of Vassily spread out in death as no cross forms a grotesque parody. This interpretation is skillfully argued—and yet one suspects that Tolstoy has "of course" insisted himself as well as the reader. Else how explain the terms of tender emotion that come to Vassily's eyes and his response "I come with joy and the same tender emotion, to the one that calls him?"

But we can agree with Wasiolek not only in his general thesis, which seems impressively proven, but in his last comment on this particular tale. All Tolstoy's instinct leads him to assert the value of life, even in a scene of mutilation like the snow waste around Vassily and his man. It was right at the beginning of this book to take issue with Bykhrenboon, excellent critic though he is, when he protests that Tolstoy coded and every truth by his scepticism. He did put beliefs and institutions unparaphrasing to rest; but always in the assurance that an ultimate truth could be established, and that this truth would bring fullness of life.

The spirit's perversion

By Richard Freeborn

JAMES D. WOODWARD:
Gogol's Dead Souls
293pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £11.80.

The history of criticism's response to Gogol's masterpiece, *Dead Souls*, since its appearance in 1842 is complex and ambiguous. It was greeted by the critic Belinsky as a masterly realistic exposure of serfdom, though he never expressed himself publicly in exactly those words. For most of the nineteenth century the view prevailed. It was a "progressive" work. If it is Gogol's own statements about his work, this was a procedure excused by the contrivance or even the sheer clumsiness of the author. In making statements that were obviously crackpot and reactionary. On the whole, such a view prevails in Soviet criticism of Gogol.

At the turn of the century, particularly under the influence of Symbolism, another school of criticism developed which saw in *Dead Souls* a work full of symbolic significance, related more to issues of spiritual quest and redemption than to the realities of Russian society. Interest in this work's meaning has been complicated by formalist critical studies, by reappraisals of its religious significance, by Freudian studies and by political considerations, but from the complexities of such treatments came one or two brilliant critical elucidations, particularly Andrey Bely's famous *Masterstvo Gogolya* of 1934.

Bely's treatment has provided the groundwork for a critical and further lexical-symbolic study. Such an ambitious critic as Nabokov has contributed to this, while others have sought to emphasize the role of the symbol (Carl Gustav Jung's *Symbolism and the Prose of Gogol*), or the grotesque (Victor Erlich). But, despite the variety of approaches, there has been fairly general critical agreement that *Dead Souls* divides into certain parts: narrated parts, dramatized parts, digressive parts, and so on. Bely's assertion, quoted in justificatory epilogue by James B. Woodward in his study, is that there is anything but details, as it were, in Gogol's narrative. To analyse the plot of *Dead Souls* means to ignore the small details of the plot and to grasp the small details of the plot. . . . There is no plot in *Dead Souls* apart from the details; it must be equated from them.

Dr Woodward has squeezed this particular lemon until the juice has been squeezed. He has tried to show that *Dead Souls* is "above all else a work of art" in which a vision of moral decline is translated into an autonomous, coherent fictional reality governed by its own unique system of laws and relationships, and that "it is an allegory of the perversion of the 'Russian soul' and a prediction of its eventual rebirth—an allegory that hinges on the portrayal of spiritual perversion as a divergence from the symbolic ideal of 'pure femininity'". To do this, he has chosen to examine the novel chapter by chapter, pursuing what he refers to as "recurrent symbolic motifs" in each of the so-called "portraits" chapters, beginning with Sobakevich, and then demonstrating how these motifs or indications are integrated into the chapters devoted to the portraits of the town and its inhabitants. He is also able to suggest that the portrait of Chichikov is partly woven from the same cloth of motifs or indications and tends to accentuate his own corruption, the central emanation of perdition which permeates Gogol's vision of hell.

The detailed character of this critical reinterpretation demands a close knowledge of the text and a willingness to follow the argument through labyrinthine details of speculative comment which can seem bizarre to the point of lunacy. This said, there is no doubt that Dr Woodward has achieved some astonishing, even astonishing, elucidations of meaning in a work that has too often been taken far too literally. And he is not to mention previous critics, who will have by now eggs on their faces, who, like, previously

read *Dead Souls* as an entertaining satire, full of gloriously funny dialogue and description but with no proper characterisation, or by Dr Woodward's demonstration of the text, and will no doubt also appreciate with surprise the complexities of sexuality in the major and minor portraits. Though unintended, this reinterpretation of *Dead Souls* lends added weight to Gogol's sexual symbolism (a work not mentioned by Dr Woodward) but on a much deeper level and with much greater sensitivity towards the literary peculiarities of Gogol's manner. It is probable that this last century view of the text, and its profound subjectivity of the literature with which he is dealing—that Dr Woodward has made his greatest contribution to our fuller understanding of the text—through his analysis has been the most brilliant and the most daring of the last century. For this Dr Woodward will earn a special place in Gogol scholarship.

If much of interest is revealed by this reinterpretation, something important is also lost. Dr Woodward's insistence, for instance, that there are no "digressions" as such, that those sections usually described in this way belong to the realm of motif and allusion to the chapters which they are a part, can help to show that the "unique system of laws" which govern the fiction but in equal measure obscures the very uniqueness of Gogol's own role as lawgiver in his novel. Gogol, the critic of *Dead Souls*, whose deep, perhaps radiological, concern for his work provoked him into continuous, agonizing scrutiny of its purpose and his own fitness to complete his task, is a shadowy personality somewhere in the background of this study. It is not the mortification of Gogol's soul that concerns Dr Woodward. *Dead Souls* is an allegory about "the mortification of the Russian soul", and in the process of following so much close analysis the reader may be forgiven for wondering whether the ultimate mortification may not be reserved for his own soul. Assembled by motifs and local allusions, the reader can gratefully turn back to the work itself and enjoy the brilliant comedy of the dialogue or the sparkle of the first chapter without any sense of indebtedness to Dr Woodward's elaborate accounts for what he calls "inconspicuous" in Gogol's magnificent final sentence about Plyushkin's garden by arguing that Gogol's "tongue was once more lodged firmly in his cheek", one is inclined to feel that in the end, all Gogol himself will have the last and longest laugh.

The *Kanyon Review*—founded by John Crowe Ransom, and for many years a main platform of the New Criticism—resumes its distinguished career next January after a gap of some eight years. The new editors are Fred Turner and Robert Lowell and Nabokov will be published in early issues, establishing continuity between the *Kanyon Review* old and new. George Sestero is the European editor and the journal will continue to develop to American notice new developments from this side of the Atlantic.

Plans include the publication of novella-length fiction, long poems, and complete plays, translations, and substantial extracts from works in progress. The editors also hope to cover experimental drama (with the help of Martin Armstrong) and a good deal of Latin American fiction and poetry (with the help of Rabassa, the translator). A lunacy, as the editors write, is to join the editors' board. Some idea of the scope can be gathered from the announcement that Guy Douglas Port, Harold Bloom, Mary Douglas, William Gass, E. L. Doctorow, and Saul Bellow were contributing to the *Kanyon Review*. Address: John Crowe Ransom, Gambier, Ohio.

Between God and Führer

By Owen Chadwick

KLAUS SCHOLDER:
Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich
Volume 1: Vorgeschichte und Zeit der Illusionen 1918-1934
897pp. Berlin: Propyläen. DM48.

Klaus Scholder gives 277 pages in the history of the German churches between 1918 and Hitler's seizure of power, 475 pages to a history of the churches during the remaining eleven months of 1933. This narrative of 1933 is in some ways familiar, for it is a history of church government, bishops, committees, pressure groups, telegrams of protest. We hear little enough about the feelings of the men in the pew or the malice in the youth movement. It is a story of negotiations behind the scenes, intrigue, tension. No recent stretch of Christian history has received more scholarly attention. For this Dr Woodward will earn a special place in Gogol scholarship.

The important innovation of the book is its weaving of the stories of the Catholic and Protestant churches into a common narrative. Their problems were very different, and they dealt with them in very different ways; and while the religious tensions were mastered by Catholic organization, they forced Protestants into non-wide action. Professor Scholder shows how the two problems were more closely linked than we have hitherto supposed.

The Concordat between Germany and the Pope, signed on July 22 by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, and von Papen as Vice-Chancellor of Germany, and ratified by exchange of documents on September 10, is still controversial in the moral judgment of the twentieth century. Scholder's account does not make it less controversial. It is, incidentally, the only one of Hitler's agreements still to be valid, though not wholly enforceable, in the present Federal Republic of Germany.

Hitler was determined to destroy the Catholic political parties (the Centre Party and its ally the Bavarian People's Party). In return for driving the Catholics out of politics, and especially the Catholic clergy, he was willing to concede the most far-reaching privileges to the Catholic Church ever conceded by a modern government (at least since the Austrian Concordat of 1855) above all, he gave them freedom to create state-financed theological schools. But there was also range of other legal provisions.

It is a curious feature of Scholder's book that, although he gives a close and detailed account of the negotiations over the signing of the 1933 Concordat, he nowhere mentions what was agreed. This omission makes the narrative more controversial still for it makes it appear as though the Pope and his Secretary of State were only concerned with small ecclesiastical gains, in return for which they were prepared to recognize the Nazi state and destroy the possibility of organized Catholic resistance to tyranny. This was precisely how it looked to some Germans at that moment. The Catholic aristocrat von Arado, who had been in protective custody since March,

1933, met in Stadelheim prison a young communist from Nuremberg who asked: "Where are your bishops? Not long ago if anyone put on a jolly which did not suit them, they made noises. Now when thousands are murdered not a single one gets up in the pulpit to extract a single word. . . . You'll see, all they want is to make a Concordat, and then they'll be safe themselves while the rest of us perish." When the news of the Concordat reached the prison, the Nuremberger embarrassed von Arado with a broad grin.

Certainly the speed with which agreement was reached was extraordinary. Concordats traditionally took years of negotiation. Von Papen set out for Rome without any preparation through normal diplomatic channels, while the Pope and his Secretary of State agreed upon the main lines of the Concordat in a few days in the middle of Holy Week and, this one in the Vatican does business with the papal nuncio, later to be notorious as Monsignor Orsini.

Within six months of gaining power Hitler had most of German public opinion fully behind him. This was partly because independent newspapers no longer dared to print anything that might offend the government, and partly because those likely to express contrary opinion were driven abroad or behind bars. But there was also from being the main cause of the wave of opinion. Germany behaved for a few months that it had found a saviour. Internal conflicts could now give way before a common endeavour to recapture the greatness and civilizing mission of the German people.

The members of the churches were not behindhand. A long tradition in German protestantism saw the vocation of the nation as a religious vocation, and thought it right to use the idea, though not often the term "chosen people", to express this sense of a national calling. Under the Weimar Republic Christian Socialists adopted what would now be called political theology; and Scholder believes that the acceptance of the mission of the new regime was quickest and easiest where theology was already politicized. Extraordinary, it was, that in that time of illusions during the summer and autumn.

One of the most dramatic was the career of Friedrich Gogarten. He was a leading systematic theologian of Germany, with a European reputation, a man who was instinctively on the left in his political theory, and who in his private life was a socialist. He had a strong desire to set up the Church as a coterie of persons and to get the working man into church even (or especially) if he marched there in brown uniform and draped his sword and belt over the altar. He expressed the idea that men must live on their feelings, that the deepest guides of life are blood and guts ("Theology", said his leader Hoesenfelder, "is nonsense—its connection between Church and People"); and was perfectly ready to accept the Aryan paragraph which excluded Jews by race from officiating as German pastors. This movement was a church government in the famous church elections of July 1933, after strong Nazi pressure, corporate voting by SA men, and a broadcast by Hitler the night before the election. For the first time, the church was dominated by the history of German Protestantism. It had only one serious thinker, Emanuel Hirsch of Oldenburg.

Yet although Scholder gives Hirsch the fairest treatment which

Concordat. They felt that they needed the legal protection which it afforded; and the clause in it which withdrew clergy from political life appeared to most of them a pity, but a necessary price to pay for the protection of their priests from physical assault or the concentration camp.

The difference between Rome and the bishops was shown when it was suggested that everyone should sing Te Deum for the signing of the Concordat. The Bishop of Regensburg suggested that they hold a service of thanksgiving as a token of reconciliation with the state. The Bishop of Passau said that he would protest if they held such a service. Cologne held a diocesan service of thanksgiving, though the Archbishop was one of the two or three bishops who thought it wrong to make a concordat with such a regime. But in Berlin cathedral they sang a Te Deum on behalf of the Reich; perhaps the papal nuncio, later to be notorious as Monsignor Orsini.

Many people felt that Rome should have refused the proffered treaty. In the belief that it would kill the possibility of serious Catholic resistance to the regime and would taint the Church with the stain of giving international recognition to a regime based on terror and racial hatred. The parallel attempt to make the Protestant churches serve the Nazi state ended in Protestant schism and the ultimate appearance of a core of opposition to the regime.

This contrast between Catholic and Protestant is hard to accept. It hardly helps much to speculate that the Protestant Church was in this long run a more effective organ of resistance than a Pope who could denounce branches of the Concordat in the encyclical "Mit brennender Sorge" or a bishop like Galati of Münster in his results upon the difference in attitude between Rome and some of the German bishops was marked. Pacelli believed that however vile some aspects of the German revolution were it was right to entrust him some of his future. Its leaders talked religious language, its head was a Catholic, if a bad Catholic, it was making noises that the revolution was over, it crushed socialist communism, and it offered to concede concessions to the Catholic Church. Pacelli was a practical man who thought too little of intangible consequences in international reputation, the force of which he underestimated. He was content to let the question of how people could best be protected under the dangerous conditions of popular revolution. Most of the German bishops also wanted the Concordat to be signed, but their approach was more hesitant. Like Pacelli, they were aware that the alternative was a Kulturkampf more ruthless than that of Bismarck because its directors would have fewer principles. Some of them placed the "highest value" in such apparently hostile conditions on the new freedom to have their own schools. But mostly they were concerned about the physical safety of their people, their priests, their former lay readers, and their youth.

A great Catholic meeting was planned for early June in Munich. It was to be a meeting of the two still obscure police chiefs Himmler and Heydrich banned the meeting. The Catholic leaders got the ban lifted; but on Saturday evening, groups of young Catholics were taken to Gestapo by the meeting had to be cancelled. One effect of this calamity was that it caused Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich to urge the disciplining of priests who entered the political arena. The guidelines of the discipline agreed to release priests held in custody on assurance from the Bishop of Speyer that they would avoid political activity. Such instructions, which a long time later, by comparison, were the real reason why most German bishops wanted the

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he has yet received from any historian of the age, his portrait of the German Christians is essentially of a trivial kind, blown up like a balloon in the time of illusions but predestined to inevitable puncture; a sound of wrongheaded or unbalanced men, in a group promoted by a Nazi politician Wilhelm Kube and wholly devoid of real popular support, depicted in the end on the physical hacking and the votes of the Nazi party, and collapsing the moment that Hitler saw it to be against his national and international interest in continuing his government's reputation to their prosperity. Perhaps this book may underestimate the popular appeal. Siegfried Leffler, for example, was an authentic and charismatic evangelist who created working men's congregations at the same time as he helped to create the Nazi party in Thuringia.

For all its length and detail this book is hard to put down. The narrative is mostly this. This is not only due to the painful interest in the story, the author's learning and the fascinating new detail which he supplies, nor only to an ability to organize a mass of intractable material into an intelligible whole. The author is engaged, and the reader will find it hard not to be likewise engaged. One is somehow made quite glad that the Poles eventually hunged "Commissar" Tsch. Schöcher is prepared to quote extracts with German historians have hardly been able to bear quoting. During the period when many Germans saw Hitler as a religious kind of saviour, things were said in pulpits or speeches which now look worse than absurd; they sound mad, even horrible. If an Englishman hesitates to read, how red must have been the face of the German who wrote. His sense of truth refuses to skate over these utterances. And sometimes he selects with a sure eye for the absurd; as when the Reich bishop chose his favourite villainist, to the strains of whose violinist, he met, Baldur von Schirach, to sign away, by a monstrous and fatal act, all the church youth organizations for incorporation in the Hitler Youth. Yet when the truly great bishop Wurm preached at Wittenberg the sermon which consecrated the new order, while a pope of "theological storm-troopers" in field-grey and carrying "swords" paraded in the city, the author's indignation is a leading bishop who wanted Jewish pastors out of the Church, and who was forced at least to resign his see and all his church offices, drafted the letter of thanks to himself, the text of which is given here and does not help to refurbish his already dismal reputation.



Generals without whalebones

By Ronald Lewin

MATTHEW COOPER:
The German Army 1933-1945
Its Political and Military Failure
608pp. Macdonald and Pells £9.75.

CHARLES W. SYDNOR, Jr.:
Soldiers of Destruction
The SS Death's Head Division, 1933-1945
387pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £28.

Goebbels detested the generals. The recently published final section of his diary has a recurrent theme—what a shrewd they are! He looks back to 1934 and laments that Hitler was a humiliated and an anarchist. "Had Hitler been an upright solid personality, in all probability some hundred generals would have been shot on 30 June," he writes. "But Hitler has no sense of putting a bit of whalebone into their jackets." As for the brass-hat in Hitler's ante-room, "they are a twenty-looking crowd making a depressing impression. It is a shame that the Führer has so few respectable military men on his staff. . . . Why has no circle of Goebbels and Schirach collected around him?" Why, indeed? This is precisely the question raised by Matthew Cooper's sparkling and impressive book.

Gods in classical mythology had a way of leaping into existence already mature and fully armed, but military historians normally require longer to ripen. It is astonishing to discover that the author of this book was only born in 1952—but then he is a Clerk of the House of Commons, an office from whose firm base Robert Rhodes James, in 1965, launched his admirable study of Gallipoli. The old grograms of military history, veterans of so many hard-fought campaigns, must welcome to their ranks a most promising recruit.

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shot assassination of Hitler was out of the question for the generals—because of their Christian faith, their oath of allegiance, their fear that the army would not follow them and that such an act might precipitate civil war. Instead, he concentrates on what he believes to be their more contemptible failure, "the greatest folly in the history of the German Army." This was the strictly professional error of allowing a megalomaniac corporal to usurp the functions of the Great General Staff.

Mr Cooper therefore devotes the bulk of his book to examining in detail the Gauleiter's slope down which the generals rolled from the allegiance oath of August, 1934—"I swear by God this holy oath"—to the point at which they were Rundstedt could say "You see that guard posted outside. If I want to post him on the other side of the house, I must first ask permission of Berchtesgaden." He is excellent all along the line, particularly in analysing the effect of Hitler on the German general staff. How many times have we not, been there, Munich, Karlovy, Louisa, the Don? With-out any shadow of originality, Mr Cooper makes it all seem fresh. His great stroke, an attempt to prove that there was no doctrine named Hitlerism, is a bit of nationalist's juggling. Whether there was a specific theory is irrelevant; the practice was what mattered. If Mr Cooper had been in a position heavily dive-bombed by Stukas, with panzers and motorized infantry waiting to roll in behind the artillery's barrage, he would not have stopped to argue about nomenclature.

But the book is essentially about the generals, without whalebones and here, as the famous phrase went, "It is a moral issue." Their degradation by Hitler, from respected professional advisers to lackeys and fellow-travellers is admirably documented and described in good lively prose, but the two central questions are lurked. Could the generals in fact have prevented Hitler from taking over the military machine without a political coup? Since that seems unlikely, ought the generals to have struck in the way "Ought" the philosopher said, means "can".

One answer comes tidily from a source strangled in the plane after July 20, 1944. Yet even that answer is imperfect, for a close analysis will show that the military members of the conspiracy were not at all united. The account of the plot, from the account of the Nuremberg paper which affirmed

acceptable to the Allies—was that they might somehow secure a peace on German terms once Hitler was eliminated. What Mr Cooper fails to bring out is that both they and the many senior officers who remained loyal to Hitler shared this fatal flaw. Their attitude was pragmatic, not moralistic. Because it lacked the burning compulsion of outrage in the face of gross evil there was never a chance of their banding together effectively to bring down Hitler, since to destroy the Führer meant destroying their Germany. So he let them by the nose.

The practical difficulties of a coup have in any case never been under-rated in this country, ignorant as it is of the all-embracing nature of the German dictatorship, and of the state-within-a-state that flourished in such an ambience. Von Brauchitsch and the other generals of the Wehrmacht declared that one of their main inhibitions was the fear of internecine conflict between the army and the SS, whose power and pervasiveness under Himmler made it a sort of alternative society. The vicious force of these custom-built restraints is beautifully illustrated in the history of the Törökopf Division, whose time-scale exactly parallels that of Mr Cooper's book.

A Professor of History in Virginia, Charles Sydnor displays all the heat qualities of American scholarship. We assume a grip on the original sources. Professor Sydnor's research has been meticulous, yet his narrative flows unencumbered. The Death's Head organization originated in a system of guards for the concentration camps and only developed through war into a massive military nexus. Such a theme to other hands could produce the high, stilted, and coloured verbiage that Americans love, but here it is sedate, lucid, and merciful. The track-record of Theodor Eicke, founder and first commander in battle of the Totenkopf, has been pieced together in a remarkable way, and remarkably it throws light on a Germany in which Mr Cooper's generals were already foreigners, where the moral, the nihilist, the ideologue, the bigot, and the mindless were king. For the account of the Törökopf Division in Russia makes compulsive reading; it was ferociously effective and—let me say—brave and self-sacrificial. But if the Cooper had fallen in the fight, the legend he had to fight it out, then certainly, on the evidence of this book, the generals were justified in being scared of the consequences.

Frederick the Great, a wood-engraving by E. Kretschmer after the drawing by Adolph von Housel, engraved in Brannpante Houscher Geschichte 1450-1850 by Wolfgang Venzler and Friedrich Kretschmer (306pp. Kränberg/Thomus: Athenäum, DM 28). The book has its origin in a German television series about the most important figures and events in the country's history. Besides serving as souvenir and companion of that series, it stands on its own as a valuable documentary introduction to German history. Beginning with the events leading up to the Peasants' Revolt—the first political manifestation of the German people—the book takes the story up to the Revolution of 1848-9. An unusual and welcome feature is that contemporary songs, ballads and poems are woven into the text. A second volume, which will bring the story up to date, is to appear early next year.

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THE COLOUR-BLIND CLASSROOM
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RAY C. RIST:
The Invisible Children
School Integration in American Society
301pp. Harvard University Press. £9.80.

When the United States Supreme Court declared in 1954 that racial segregation in the public schools was unconstitutional, the meaning of this ruling—known as the Brown decision—was almost immediately clear: to eliminate racial distinctions from public policy. Until 1954, the southern states maintained dual school systems, one for whites and another for blacks, under the then legally principle of "separate but equal." White schools were almost invariably better equipped and better staffed; and even when white and black schools were equally endowed, the black schools were in fact stigmatized as inferior schools for an inferior race. When the Court struck down the state laws that required or permitted assignment of children by race, it held that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

But this historic decision had a fundamental ambivalence at its core, and this ambivalence has made the desegregation issue a political and legal paradox. On the one hand, the Court seemed to be affirming the necessity of racially neutral public policies, policies that treat all citizens equally without recognizing the colour of their skin. Yet on the other hand, the decision eventually became the foundation for explicitly racial-conscious policies intended to desegregate separate schools.

Over the past quarter-century, the Brown decision has been transformed. In 1954, it seemed to mean that children could not be assigned to public schools on the basis of their race; by the 1970s, the same decision was used to justify the assignment of children solely on the basis of race in order to promote desegregation. The intent of the southern states for more than a decade after the Brown decision, the persistence of systematic segregation, the absorption of the civil rights movement, and the racial riots of the 1960s, and the enactment of strong civil rights legislation—all combined to put the courts and the federal bureaucracy into the business of establishing desegregation guidelines and enforcing them. According to the Supreme Court, the "segregation" changed; in 1954, it meant the end of state-imposed segregation, the removal of racial barriers, the absence of discriminatory practices and policies; by now, many courts take it to mean racial mixing or racial busing. If there is both semantic and pragmatic confusion, much of this confusion can be traced to shifts in the philosophy of the Supreme Court, which for several years, beginning in 1968, imposed racial balancing on state school systems as a remedy for past discrimination, but which ruled only last year that the existence of one-race schools (be they all-white or all-black) was not in itself evidence of unconstitutional discrimination.

Ray C. Rist's *The Invisible Children: School Integration in American Society* is a reflection of the present ambiguity of racial policy rather than a measured sorting out of conflicting purposes. By no means does the book live up to its subtitle, which suggests an examination of school integration in American society. Instead, it is a limited, anecdotal, and interesting report on Rist's observations of an integration programme in one school in Portland, Oregon. He records of classroom observations a rich, small-scale, anecdotal portrait of a consistently failing programme in the "separate" school in a city with a small black population (11 per cent of the city's total enrolment). Since blacks are about 12 per cent of the nation's population, Portland is of national significance, representative of the public school enrolment of most big American cities. In the year of Rist's observations, 1977-78, the "separate" school had thirty black students who voluntarily transferred out of their neighbour-

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hood schools to attend Brush, a school of about 500 white children. The purpose of the voluntary transfer programme was to disperse black students away from predominantly black schools and thus to avoid mandatory racial assignments ("busing") of the sort that have caused major public conflicts in cities like Boston.

Everyone involved saw advantages for themselves: for the black parents, there was the expectation that their children would receive an education superior to that available in the neighbourhood school. For the parents and professionals at Brush School, there was the satisfaction of feeling that they were fulfilling something akin to a civic duty by helping black children.

Rist devoted much of his attention to first-grade classes, and his descriptions of teacher and student behaviour are fascinating. The black children were distributed so that there were no more than one or two in any particular class, and the school's policy was to treat the black children just like the white children—same standards, same expectations, same discipline. Except for taunts from older children, there was little evidence of racism, either overt or covert. While the teachers displayed unfamiliarity with black customs and family life, they seemed sincere in wanting the black children to learn.

Yet despite good intentions, the problems in adjusting the black children to the school were, in fact, most of them seemed attributable to the vast cultural gap between the children. The white children came from high-achieving families, with high levels of income and education; the black children apparently came from a cross-section of poor and working-class families in some of which there was no father, and in none of which was there a social background akin to that of the privileged Brush neighbourhood children.

One black child told repeatedly, another could barely utter a word during the day. The black children brought with each other an IQ known as "the class clown," and others quickly became labelled as disciplinary problems. The head of the school estimated that most of the black children would not score in the 40s on the IQ test, and that some might be close to "oligocubia mentally retarded."

In most of the classes, the black children fell far behind the rest of the children academically. Rist observed time and again the physical separation of the black students from the remainder of the group, either for punishment or for academic reasons. One first-grade teacher worried about what his children of both races were learning:

I can't see what good integration does in these circumstances. What will the white children think when they see that black children are so academically poor? And what about the black child's self-image? What is he going to think about himself when he compares his work with the work of the white students around him, and finds out he is at the bottom of the class?

To Rist, the heart of the maladjustment between the blacks and the Brush School is the school's strong emphasis on academic achievement and its desire to get the black children to perform as well as the white children. He considers this to be a form of assimilationism which forces the black children to become "invisible" by aspiring to the same norms as white children. What he most objects to is the "tokenism" in the voluntary transfer programme in which a few black children were present in the school. And Rist does convincingly demonstrate the painful estrangement of the black child to the Brush School, though it is never clear whether the source of this estrangement is racial or cultural.

He has written this book to demonstrate, presumably, what should not happen, since he does not approve of tokenism or of the school's efforts to treat all children similarly. Curiously, while he finds the transfer programme to be tokenism to be objectionable, the only black professionals that he cites hold the contrary view. Those two are members of a panel of

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Volume 2: Plates, 164pp.
New York University Press, \$75 the set.

Millard Meiss, who died in 1975, was a scholar interested in early Renaissance painting, most actively in the Trecento and Quattrocento and the French fifteenth century. He was widely known first for his book *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (The Arts, Religion and Society in the Mid-Fifteenth Century) (1951), a pioneer essay in stating a relation between painting and cultural circumstance with precision and detail. But he wrote articles and books on Trecento fresco and its technique, on religious symbolism in Italian art, and later on French painting in the time of Jean de Berry, a field he did much to make more accessible with a series of monumental publications. A selection of his articles published in paperback in 1976, *The Painter's Choice*, showed something of his approach. The total was a remarkable and homogeneous achievement and must have set clear terms of reference for the contributors to this *Festschrift*.

Festschriften are an art historians' vice and set problems for all parties. Many publishers seem to be solving them in these hard times by shunning the genre. Contributors must find something short and with some relation to the dedicatee's interests. Editors lose friends. Librarians, the main purchasers, have difficulties with classification. But the worst problem is a special one of the reader's: how to codify that, ten years off, one will recall from some hotch-

potch the article that did not interest one then but would now.

This present collection of forty-five articles is less incoherent than some. By fairly firmly limiting contributions in the area of Millard Meiss's own research interests the editors have prevented the miscellany character getting quite out of hand. The papers range in length from a number of modest four-page notes, chips from distinguished beeches, to a quite long piece, 10,000 or so words, on "Alberti's Light" by James S. Ackerman, and many fall fairly naturally into groups corresponding to Meiss's interests.

One cluster would be the pieces on religious symbolism, sometimes hidden symbolism, in Renaissance paintings. Jan Blazowski discusses the mirrors shown in Renaissance pictures and is concerned to emphasize that they are clearly there as often as as much for their visual interest as their symbolic interest. Samuel Y. Edgerton Jr. makes productive use of St. Antoninus's and other current accounts of the Virgin and the Annunciation to suggest symbolic meanings in the physical background detail of Quattrocento Annunciation pictures. Marilyn Aronberg Levin identifies the subject St. Joseph in driving in Robert Campin's *Morote Altarpiece* as a strainer for a winepress, and so an allusion to the Mystic Winepress of Isiah and St. Augustine and medieval Christ symbolism.

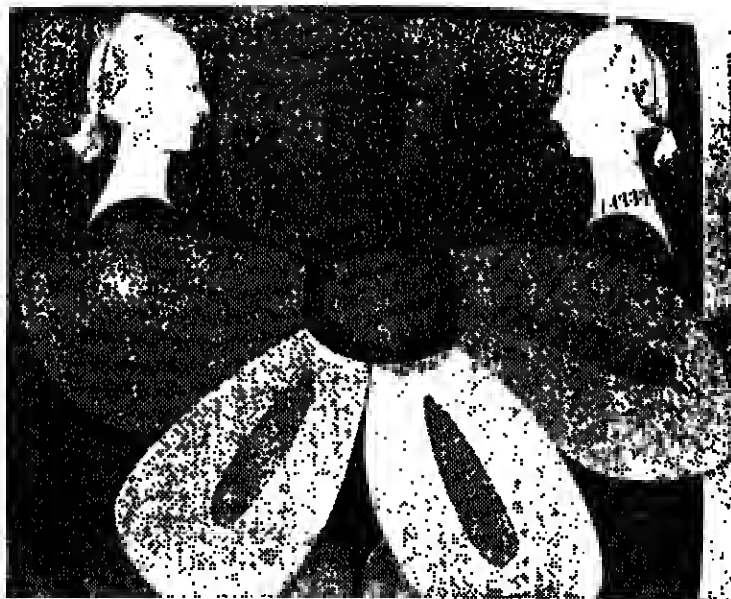
Mirella Levi d'Ancona gives an ingenious exposition of Mantegna's Vienna St. Sebastian in the light of Paduan Aristotelianism. The argument is too elaborate to summarize or excerpt fairly but leads to a view of the picture in which every object can carry several intended significances: thus the boats in the right background "allude to the calling of Peter and Andrew, to Saturn's arrival in Italy, and to Mantegna's own calling to Mantua." Yet more, "the curved wake of the boat is linked with the image of the sailor steering a ship in the operation of navigation, which was used by the Paduan philosopher

Francesco Zabarella (d. 1417) as an illustration of the rational soul".

A second cluster is four articles by Italian scholars on the media of Italian mural painting. Leonardo Tintori reports and discusses an analysis of some pigments used in the frescoes of S. Francesco at Assisi—which he worked and wrote on with Millard Meiss—and Giovanni Paccagnini writes again on the weird consistency of the Pisanello murals at Mantua. In two interesting articles Umberto Baldi and Ugo Procacci restate and suggest their argument that Trecento fresco painters normally drew direct on the wall in shops without preliminary drawings, whereas only in the fifteenth century Andrea del Castagno and others began making drawings which were then enlarged into cartoons for transfer to the wall. It is a fascinating issue that bears not only on the procedure of fresco design but on the status of such early Renaissance drawings as do survive, and the argument has been lively for some years now.

A third cluster consists of Renaissance articles on French Renaissance painting. Francis Avril pursues Italianist elements in four early fourteenth-century manuscripts attributed to a "Master of Jean de Cherchomont". Carl Nordenskiöld discusses secular manuscripts produced for Jean sans Peur, and Charles Sterling a Burgundian Crucifixion panel of about 1420 that seems to have affinities with both the Limbourg brothers and Italian painting. Herbert Kessler writes on a Flemish manuscript of the *Miracle de Phaulx* and its relation to around 1500, and Rainer Hausmann publishes an add sixteenth-century Apocryphal manuscript whose sources apparently range from a thirteenth-century English manuscript to Dürer's woodcut cycle.

All three groups correspond to central interests of Millard Meiss. But, of course, many interesting items among the forty-five fall outside. For instance, there are two articles concerned with how far Renaissance landscapes were topographically accurate representations



"Masters' Images—after Paolo Uccello" by Santa Ghezzi (b. 1920), from the catalogue of The James A. Michener Collection: Twentieth Century American Painting (372pp., University of Texas Press, £19.25, paperback £10.50).

of actual places: Felton Gibbons seeks the originals of the towns represented in Giovanni Bellini's background, and Ludwig H. Heydenreich finds those of mountains drawn by Leonardo in the Madrid Codex. And—to declare a personal favourite in the collection—there is one unobtrusively beautiful paper by Hendrik W. Van Os, "Vecchietta and the Perenna of the Artist", which one particularly hopes will not go under.

Van Os is concerned with how we may best locate the emergence of the Renaissance artist as someone with an individual public personality—a familiar but awkwardly elusive development—and argues that we tend in this matter to divorce the artist from the style of his work, that what is most needed is case histories in which both are followed in close relation. He then does just this with the Sienese artist Lazzaro di Pietro, il Vacchietto, in a straightforward narrative out of which an individual emerges and modes here displayed by his pupils and friends owe much to him and are still much with us.

HEINRICH UNSELD (Editor):
Goethe's "Das Tagebuch" und
Rilke's "Sieben Gedichte"
Hipp. Frankfurt: Insel.

Goethe and Rilke have been the mainstays of the Insel-Bücherei, the series of brightly coloured elegantly composed little volumes of German and world literature launched by Anton Klippenberg in May, 1912. To celebrate the one thousandth title Siegfried Unseld, now head of both Insel Verlag and Suhrkamp, and Klippenberg's spiritual heir, has combined the two canon authors in a characteristically witty and illuminating way.

The occasion is Goethe's poem "Das Tagebuch". Set down in the spring of 1810, this narrative in twenty-four eight-line stanzas, tells of a sexual fiasco. The author of "the diary" is hurrying home to his wife after a prolonged absence.

On the way he is overtaken by a carriage which breaks down on the road. He is forced to spend the night at an inn. A sweet young creature serves him supper. Overcome by desire, the traveller leaps up to embrace her. She bids him be patient till midnight. Filled with her trust, she waits in his arms. The would-be lover, however, finds himself impotent. He is possessed with the remembrance of his wife and of the erotic intensity of their first encounters and wedding. At dawn, the untouched nymph slips away and the traveller throws himself into his carriage for the journey home. Goethe's appendix which he himself calls a sentimental moral, is a short piece on the nature of love.

The narrator recalls his wedding day and the incident which happened as he approached the altar and the crucified Saviour:
Var. Delenem. Jaunerkreuz,
blutrinnetter Christe,
Vernimm mir's Gott, es regte sich der
Ist.

The "Tagebuch" was known in

Variations on a fiasco

By George Steiner

Goethe's amanuensis, Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer (who may have made more than one copy of it) and in a circle of male friends to whom the poet read his stanzas to Karlstadt and Jena (from Schiller was kept out of earshot). But this text soon vanished from official sight and was not included in the normal editions or even listings of Goethe's collected works. Yet it led a shadowy clandestine life. A pirated text, limited to less than fifty copies, appeared in 1861; the Vienna police seized a reprint in 1879; a lame translation into French turned up in Nancy in 1881; the Society of Bibliophiles in Munich issued thirty-six copies in 1908. But it was not, in fact, until its inclusion in the second volume of Emil Stalger's three-volume edition of Goethe's complete poems, after the Second World War, that "Das Tagebuch" could be said to be in general circulation.

Why this suppression, asks Dr. Unseld, who recounts the story with gusto. Things were grounded in convention: Goethe had achieved Olympian status even before his death, and bits of private or misanthropic indiscretion were either purged from such national shrines as the great Weimar edition—the *Sophtenwerke*—which began in 1875—or, if rescued, they were readings of *The Roman Elegies* in a case (in point). But, argues Unseld, the attempts to "bury the 'Tagebuch' altogether or to publish it, where at all, in a bowdlerized version, have an absolutely specific and dramatic cause. It is the rhythmic couplet which concludes the seventeenth stanza.

The narrator recalls his wedding day and the incident which happened as he approached the altar and the crucified Saviour:
Var. Delenem. Jaunerkreuz,
blutrinnetter Christe,
Vernimm mir's Gott, es regte sich der
Ist.

It is this episode and the unprecedented enormity of the rhyme *Christe/Iste*, says Unseld, which relegated the poem to a subterranean or mutilated status. The two offending lines first appear in their pristine state in the volume annexed in the Weimar edition in 1914. Their first publication in any popular format must await 1923. Yet even after 1945, as Unseld points out, references to "Das Tagebuch" in the vast secondary literature are cursory at best and the key-couplet is passed over in silence (Stalger offers neither elucidation nor comment).

Dr. Unseld's enthusiasm is infectious, and he is surely right when he says that Goethe's *Lebenswerk* "der Iste" is the "true" "he there" — a significant phallus in an inspired neologism. But the scabrous matter may not be entirely as novel as the undoubtedly original and audacity of the rhyme would suggest. I believe that there are medieval fables and Renaissance novels (Goethe was familiar with both genres) which hint at or even narrate moments of sexual arousal before the image of saints and even of the blessed Virgin. The use of the cross for sexual excitement, moreover, occurs in *Sade*. Might there be a small point, furthermore, to be added to Unseld's masterly exegesis of the poem as a whole? Goethe altered *blutrinnetter* to *blutrinnetter*.

Unseld argues that this was because of his empty documented distaste for the baroque depictions of martyrs which he had found in the Italian baroque. But could there not be a more immediate motive for revision? The young girl has expected defecation; it is just because she is intact and free that she chooses to commit to the lover's embrace. She awakes un-mutilated:
Un-
widerfindet.

So stutzt sie, blüht und schlägt die Augen nieder...
Blutrinnetter would have given in this arch but tender motif an ugly counterpoint.

Eido Mason's monograph on Rilke and Goethe has, as Unseld emphasizes, covered the essential ground. It has shown in detail the extreme ambivalence of Rilke's attitude towards the titan in his path. Nevertheless, much new material has been made available in the past two decades: notably the expanded editions of Rilke's correspondence and the invaluable Rilke-Chronicle published by Ingeborg Schnack in 1975. Using these new sources, Dr. Unseld draws a brilliant vignette of the poet's encounter with "Das Tagebuch".

It occurred during the third week of July, 1913, when Rilke was visiting the Klippenbergs in Leipzig. Klippenberg took a private printing of the poem from his extensive Goethe collection and read it to his guest (like Frau Schiller on an earlier occasion, Frau Klippenberg was provisionally absent). Rilke was deeply moved, and, as a consequence of this impression, in part at least, wrote the seven "Phalliche Hymnen" (the *Sieben Gedichte* of Unseld's title) which Rilke wrote in his notebook in October and November, 1915.

Other suggestions were also at work, particularly the interest in Freudian doctrine fostered by Rilke's continued intimacy with Lou Andreas-Salomé. As early as October, 1913, an entry in Lou's journal shows that Rilke was carrying in his mind the thought of phallic hymns and that these were to be associated, in the poet's view, with Freud's bold treatment of the libido. It was in Munich, two years later and under pressure of world war, with its life-denying culture, that Rilke put on paper these invocations to the force of eros. Unseld's finding is scrupulously fair:

If "Das Tagebuch" was not the only or formal inspiration of the Rilke hymns, it is none the less almost certain that Rilke's unusual endeavour and exaltation in the expression of sexuality would not have been realized without Goethe's example.

The "Phalliche Hymnen" do not add much to the canon (and have, of course, been available in Volume 2 of Ernst Zinn's edition of the complete poems). Rilke's use of "tree", "tower", and "pillar" to image phallic energy is both conventional and related to the use of these same markers in the *Sonnets to Orpheus*. But there is something oddly, historically Lawrentian in Rilke's poem:

Was Wäre Lehm on Lehm?
formte der Gott nicht fühlend die
Figur,
die zwischen uns erwächst.

Figur, die zwischen uns erwächst:
das ist mein Körper, welcher
aufsteht.
Nun hilf ihm leise aus dem heissen
Grabe...

But whereas these seven hymns lack the wit, the poignant reserve in Goethe's fable, Dr. Unseld's study and the format of Insel-Bücherei 1,000 retain it admirably.

Das Gesamtwerk (452pp., Reinbek: Rowohlt, DM18), edited and annotated by his Wiener Gruppe friend and collaborator Gerhard Rühm, documents Konrad Bayer's progress from the playful five-finger exercises of his poetry and playlets to the unflinching self-probe of his major prose works, *Der Kopf des Ulm* (1969) and *Der sechste Sinn*. Growing doubt about the possibility of communication culminated in *solipsism*: the project of a history to be written in the "price high" Bayer took his life in 1964; but his work has remained one of the models for the new generation of Austrian writers.

P. L.

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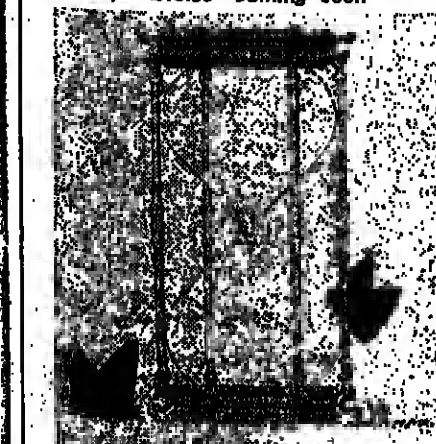
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I think, therefore I am. Kle
continues that sentence, something
like this: I think, therefore I

There is an empty space, Kleist is not at all afraid to lead us back to Ernst Mach. Relativity is a problem only to the Idealist, eager for answers. In nature it is not a problem but a fact. But the intellect which produces absolute truth, which produces obstacles to truth, obstacles to divert the disturbing flow. Kleist too is human; he wants to know. But it is possible to know even when one is not. It is coloured by thought; observed.

I think, therefore I am: Kleist continues that sentence, something like this: I think, therefore I am

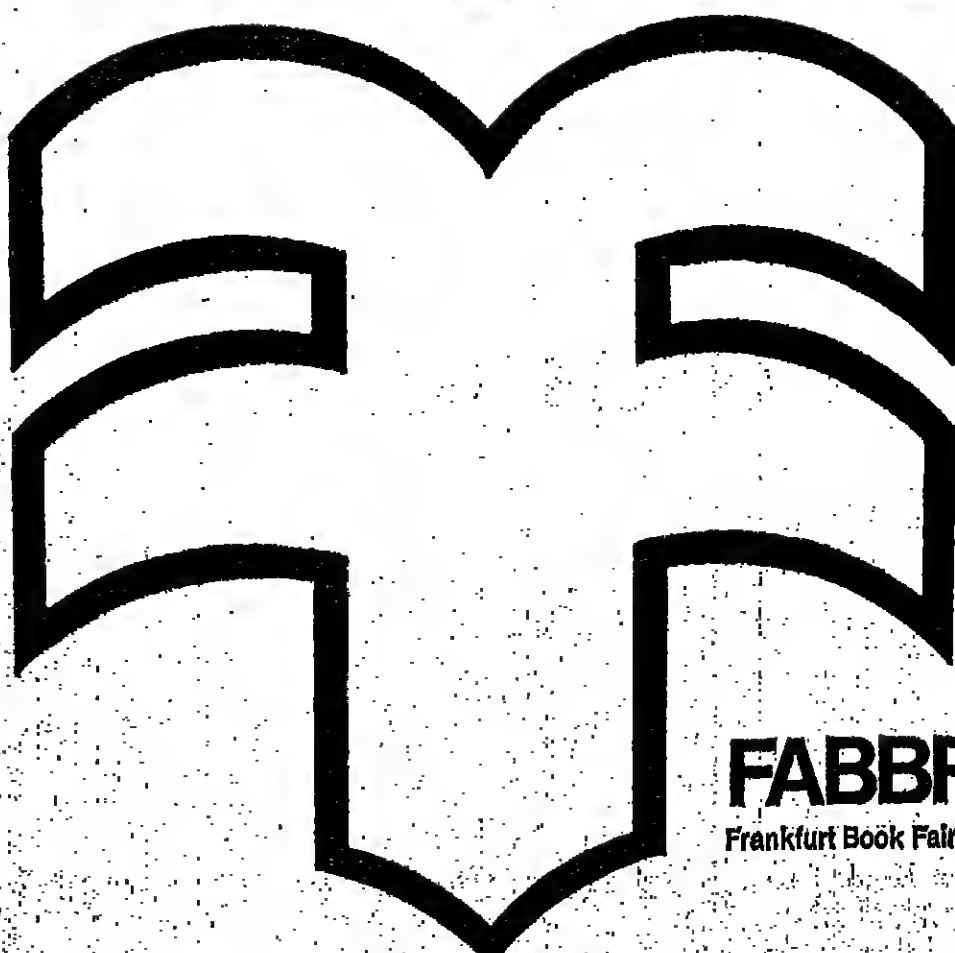
Portans in this short essay in happens there is a clearcut, a push up the ability for foreigners to accept this relatively straightforward piece is not exactly 'easy for the translator—which may also be the fact that, as far as I know, there is no other English version available (a translation by Chomsky and Murray was published in the summer of 1937 issue of *Life and Letters* in *Toulon*). It's the kind of work which is opaque from every angle of sympathy; and that the doubtful is a pity; thought it was accepted this Kleist would have accepted this as a scientific matter. He was a trained mathematician, and in this essay he uses mathematical concepts (and he uses what you'd think to be every aspect of his experience to help him in this last effort to give his presence to a spiritual concept. Here the idea is quite explicit, and as Kleist (and not his struggling translator) can make it

An impromptu exhibition of eighteen of Escher's early water colours was mounted in 1971 at the

In 1973 Dr Sular mounted an exhibition of about 270 of Escher's works. The original German edition of *Vierzig und Fünfundzwanzig Jahre in der Schweiz* (1976) and the subsequent English edition, well translated by Stanley Moson, contains the identical illustrations, but without the text, short of material or specialized Swiss interest. Dr Sular has also written a valuable study of Escher's interest in the particular landscape, *Die Pommeroyen und ihre Vorentwicklung*, which at the moment is available only as the second part of a superbly produced facsimile edition of the Escher panoramas (Orell Füssli are to publish it next year, and at a relatively low price), Dr Sular makes a very good case for Escher not only as the founder of the Swiss school of panorama artists, an honour hitherto accorded to Heinrich Koller, but also as one used to think of as the two generally recognized inventors of the modern panorama.

Until he had established his reputation in Zurich as a naturalist—lecture to an audience of ladies on the significance of glaciers, the resistance—he preferred to re-

Escher's interest in "geognosy" as the subject was known before Sanssouci popularized the term "geology", had first been aroused by J. P. Vaucher, a young theologian who had turned to botany when he looked as though his clerical career might be compromised in the quest for a "universal geology" that would evaluate the genesis of the



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earth. In the eighteenth century this was a familiar predicament, as witness Johann Jakob Scheuchzer (1672-1733) whose efforts in bringing science into a Baroque accord with religion reveal just how antipathetic to the spirit of Enlightenment were the more socially backward German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

Scheuchzer's startling point was the incontrovertible fact of the Flood, in which the fossil animals must have perished and the displacement of strata must have occurred. Voltaire ridiculed such naive illusionism by consulting the shells found on high mountains were simply shells deposited by pilgrims. There was provocation enough for such taunts, as religious pressures effected all manner of intellectual dislocation and searches by no means an isolated example: the dogma that the wretched fossils had been hidden in the ground by God, or even the Devil, to test man's faith persisted, even in places far less isolated than the Swiss valleys until the mid-nineteenth century.

However, Saussure, inventor of the bird's-eye panorama, came from French-speaking Geneva and his investigations were subject to no trial by faith. His *Younger Alps* (1779-86) was based on eighteen years of exploration and was an inspiration to Escher, whose watercolours may be seen as a visual complement to Saussure's enthusiastic prose; both men were among the first to describe the glaciers as "splendid" and "magnificent". Escher even speaks of glaciers being "dreadfully flustered".

In Saussure's book we may see the draft of an unhindered study of the earth's origin. He himself, looking back over his life's work, declared that he had been unable to discover any grand principle behind creation, since "il n'y a rien de constant dans la formation des Alpes, que l'inconstance" — a remark which earned him a rebuke from Escher's biographer J. J. Hottinger (1852). Indeed, while Escher was certainly inspired by Saussure's curiosity and descriptive skill, his own belief was in an all-pervading harmony: "I resolved", he wrote to the Archduke John of Austria, another geognostic amateur, to get to know the topography of the Alps, to see the "chaotic" and "chaotically one above the other". I made tours in them, finding everywhere coherence, ranges and corresponding stratification, [and] in this way they are a conformable order.

Yet unlike J. C. Lavater, the Zurich pastor, mystic and celebrated physiognomist who believed quite literally that the face could mirror the mountains, and whose *Das geistige Tugabuch* was surely known to him, Escher cannot be accused of any serious a priori scholasticism. In his autobiography he describes reading Kant in the winter of 1794-95, the first one of whose *Critique of Human Judgment* failed to satisfy him "thirst for knowledge". But he was greatly interested in the second part, the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*, which prompted him to observe:

My study of the higher natural history of the Alps had revealed to me a very satisfactory teleological view on them. I had found that mountains are not by any means chaotic elevations of the earth's surface, but that they have a regular direction and gradation above each other and must therefore have formed part of the firm plan of creation of the earth.

There could surely be nothing there for the elders of the church to fault. Kant would of course have confirmed Escher's intuitive strategy, so that although Escher would have tended to collect evidence supportive of the reign of order rather than seek out anything which might refute that hypothesis, he may be seen as having kept a singularly open mind for a man of his time. He did not share Goethe's thirst for *Urphänomene*, nor did he follow Goethe in proceeding from some grand idea to empirical observation and then back to the idea. Yet like the two men did have something important in common: the purpose of his morphological studies as "to recognize living forms as such, to see to contrast their visible and tangible parts, to perceive them as manifestations of something within, and thus to master them, to a certain extent, in their wholeness."

On the evidence of his drawings, Escher made no attempt to squeeze the mountains into a mould of his own or anyone else's devising. The only "unscientific" reference is that of his artistic skill which, however (as we have seen), sought to be strictly instrumental and not offending. Only a year before his death he said: "I know just enough false ideas as to their constitution, but as soon as I am asked to give a better explanation, I see insurmountable difficulties before me."

Nevertheless, Escher had more or less correctly interpreted examples of inverse stratification (1809), and believed in the formation of valleys by river erosion (1818). Both discoveries brought him unpleasant and unsought controversy with the stubborn neptunist Leopold von Buch (1774-1853) who, with most other geologists of his day, believed that valleys and mountains alike when the universal ocean dried out. That experience may have weakened Escher's already slender interest in defending or publishing his opinions, and it was left to the next generation, which included his son Arnold, to evaluate his magnificent collection of evidence.

Escher himself, ever modest and intellectually feeble, considered that his knowledge could not justify either the far-reaching speculation of Saussure or the premises so jauntily assumed by von Buch. Yet Escher's records of geological phenomena have outlived the theories of his contemporaries. Although he died seven years before Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), and some fifteen to twenty years before the propagation of glacial theory by his fellow Swiss, Louis Agassiz, Escher's work is keenly studied even today by geologists and geographers.

His artistic achievement may be put into perspective by comparing it with the pictorial landscape style of his master, Bullinger, who had himself been influenced by Canaletto and the wide-angle views of Dutch artists, especially those of Jan Hackaert. Yet although Escher was quick to absorb his master's manner, there was already a prophetic distinction in that whereas Bullinger, after sketching from nature, preferred to finish his work at home softening mountain forms into atmospheric impressions, Escher was out scanning the horizon, rendering natural features with all possible precision long before he arrived at his interest in geometry. He drew mountain ranges on the remote skyline with the same distinction of line and strength of colour as objects in the foreground. The particular lighting adopted is not based on the impression of a passing moment, but is that which best emphasises the modelling of the landscape. Thus, although his expeditions were mostly made in summer, it is only rarely that the watercolours convey much sense of season, time of day or weather. What they do convey is the eternal landscape of living rock, glacier and mountain pasture.

It is not surprising, then, if the ribs, ridges and undulations observed by Escher have something of the quality of clinical studies. These majestically severe pictures create an irresistible impression that his purpose is nothing less than a complete anatomical atlas of the Alps. Yet this is no mere academic exercise. Escher treats the earth's crust as heaving, animate form. His passion seems to be to seek behind appearance for the life force within. Escher's draughtsmanship invests his views and panoramas with the austere beauty of exactitude. In every now and then the grid is there. Escher is caught out daring to dramatize the lighting and animate the gloomy sculptural forms, though it must be said that one misses something of the open exuberance of such visiting English contemporaries as Francis Towne, J. R. Coxons or Turner. Escher leaves one with a paradox in that his pre-photographic attempts at objective recording necessarily rely on artistic convention; to succeed as science they must, for all Escher's misgivings, also succeed as art, which they most certainly do. So that even if Escher himself valued his watercolours primarily as records of natural phenomena, we may adopt a more relaxed attitude to the scientific imperative, judging his work at least as highly for its art as for its impressionist documentation of the Alpine landscape.

Gustav Solar is working on a edition of the landscape which is hoped will be published in 1981 as *Die Conrad Escher von der Anselchten und Panoramen der Schweiz: Werkverzeichnis*.

Celebrating the crumbs

By John Mole

THEODORE WEISS:
Stew & Spectacles
selected Poems
App. Chatto and Windus. £2.95.

Stew & Spectacles is a keen, rigorous selection of thirty-five poems drawn from the five volumes that Theodore Weiss has published in the United States of America since 1960. It should serve to introduce new English readers to a writer who, spikily intelligent and for whom the making of poetry is a delighted idiosyncratic conversation shaped around parentheses, hesitations and qualifications, breaking out at intervals into sheer affirmations. Often seeming a little awkward (and, I think, a little awkwardly) at first, these poems which demand careful attention until their voice is assimilated into the necessary balance of mind achieved in one's response. Not that they are always both in their syntax and in a habit of shooting off at nominative tangents from what appears to be a direct narrative line, they are surprising and often refreshingly unpredictable. A number of them begin, deceptively, in a way that the event disavows into the larger questions it has raised or, as in "The Last Day and The First", is perceptually dismissed.

The stock woman at the door, with her young daughter "Linda" looking down, as she pulls out several copies of *The Watchtower* from her canvas bag,

In a heavy German accent asks me: "Have you ever thought that these may be the last days of the world?"

At which point, receiving the answer "Yes I have", she and the blonde girl without a further word, turning tail, sheepishly walk away, leaving the poem to Professor Weiss, who takes his way through to a demurely affirming postscript in which he asks that every passing season should be ever the last day of this world about to

burst/and ever for blossoming the first.

He is, in fact, despite the ironic checks and balances which dictate the style and pace of his work, a celebrator, a yes-sayer, a kind of opportunist, a eulogist for whom every last is a first. There is even a helpful energy in his historical digressions, for example, the burning of the library at Alexandria was a witty conflagration... a magnitude long lost/restored to the sky, and what activates his imagination is not the accumulation of knowledge ("the clogged-up libraries today") but "the world in its juicy, janyous particulars".

Professor Weiss's admiration and affection for William Carlos Williams are too soon given over to the moment, as, later, faithfully serving it — is openly declared in "Yes But..." which contrasts his friend's spontaneity with a public appearance by the aging Robert Frost ("no doubts shaking him and him") and, like Williams, his work is that of a complex, restless nihilist. He is a witness to the breaking out of leaves: "the virtue of art" is "that it, somehow surviving, happens again and again".

For Williams it was "no idea but in things". For Professor Weiss it is "at once to see/and, seeing, be". Without the immediacy of perception, breaking down the categories, there is no space for the imagination, no poetry. The spectacles he wears for, in the selection, the poem, or a pair... opt to spit at least two times/once... or at least disarms the blur and senses between what's in what's out. They become emblematic of the emphasis he places on the significance of small particulars closely observed and precisely arranged to make sense of the world ("paris that must harmonise into something that rewards them for being, towards/with what they are") and views become more or less spectacles depending upon the intensity with which they are absorbed:

I sit among jammed treasures, lit whenever I chance to notice them...

As for the great scenes, the spectacular events, Theodore Weiss takes issue with the Auden of "Musée Des Beaux Arts". We are

"not indifferent, let alone oblivious" to those things that we can use. This is the greatness of each creature, the mouse at the Feast of the Gods, one crumb doing for it what heaped-up platters cannot do for them.

We notice what we can, and the bird, that Professor Weiss is able to see because his quick celebrations, fragments cohering into distinctive, sharp-minded poems.

Less successful are those occasions when his habitual accumulation of the positive becomes banal statement: "Somewhere in all this I have a sense of what it is to be really alive" — and although in a poem such as "A Letter from the Plagues" Den Whose-You-Are-That-You-Are is addressed with a whimsically engaging intimacy, an embarrassing note of cock-eyed optimism inflates things to a pitch of sentimental rhetoric which verges on the back-slapping cheerfulness of a Rodgers and Hammerstein chorus:

In short, though there's a scheme about to blow your ark and all in it to smitherens, to pitch a cloudy climbing tower will convert the earth into one tomb, I know by feelings craning, peering, deep inside the ark's still riding, riding high.

This is scholastic, and although Professor Weiss insures himself against such strictures elsewhere by deliberately muddying his intimations ("the poem is/satisfactory" — referring to one of his own: "Some lines—the eyewash/about a new day, etc.—are a little hard to swallow") he does nevertheless sometimes plunge into exclamation eye-vash, mistaking it for an on-quest register of sincerity.

Despite these lapses, though, *Stew & Spectacles* contains many good poems and a handful of outstanding ones, including "An Everlasting Once" and the particularly moving and beautiful "A World To Be" — reminiscent of "A Boy At The Window" by Richard Wilbur, another poet of stylized affirmation with whom, at his best, Theodore Weiss invites comparison.

Grammar in the streets

By John Fuller

DARYL LINE:
Daylight Sailing
55pp. New York: Atheneum. \$6.95.

NIN HAMKE:
The Difference between Night and Day
90pp. Yale University Press. £5.75 (paperback, £2.15).

Daryl Line is a Canadian poet in his early forties, former editor of *Poetry*, author of some half a dozen collections of verse. Evidence of an education in classics and philosophy is to be found in those new poems in a variety of agreeable forms, particularly in judicious allusions and syntactical economy. A fondness for metaphysical and lexical jokes and a pervasive scholarly melancholy. His commonest device is to bring the world of the senses and the world of grammar into metaphorical conjunction: The encyclopaedic sheet surrenders secrets sometimes lost in puns, metaphors, persons, numbers, genders.

If the world is a matter of style, the right style, there is a heroic sense in these poems of a need to purify its language with a steely verbal elegance. The quotation above is from the longest poem in the book, a sonnet sequence in dactylic pentameter and dactylic hexameter. The sequence is typical of his civilized erotic self-criticism, somewhat elevated in this traditional form, but elsewhere evident in a number of more direct pieces which also lament on unstable love. I find him sometimes slightly disconcerting blend of openness and insidiousness, sometimes too neat or quibbling, but frequently touching, exact, musical and evocative.

Nine constructs his poems logically and exploits recognized verse techniques. Nin Hamke, some ten years younger, does not: his methods are largely imitative or

improvisational, his work fragmentary, elusive, prosy. He is also the kind of writer who believes that the mystery of his particular medium allows him to say things like "mudling is clean but war and music" or "astronomers know the texture of fish" or "stars leave eggs under the fingernails while you sleep". Do they indeed? I confess to not following many of his unions, and was glad to find that the rein of fantasy was muted and controlled in most of the later poems in the book. Stars, for instance, figuring very frequently in his pages, can really too easily assume the role of inscrutable and unaccounted witnesses to human life. The pathos, too, of man's elusive presence in the universe and his uncertain pervention of it, can lead to over-fine gestures:

Sometimes in the night I see the flesh as flotsa circling the house. Surely it is to light my way into for the next one thousand years. At this point in such a poem one would feel better for a touch of useful irony, but Hamke steps up the pace and elevates the conceit into a solemn oration about human (or poetic?) destiny: "We shall die in the light of our making."

Elsewhere, the humorlessness is subsumed in a direct and dramatic treatment of more credible subjects, and Hamke's meaning sometimes becomes plainer. In many sexual poems, or poems about the poet's relationship with father, daughters or wife, there is a striking old original vein of vulnerable appeal, naivety and honesty:

my daughter on the beach whirls in sympathy with gulls. If I listen long enough to this pink shell I will hear her speak to me again. She will say You were right. Father, it was all my fault. I should never have grum.

This round in the breast, this toll — I shall never do it again. Hamke presents us with a solitary persona, impotent, suspicious, martyred, obtuse, and yet strangely interesting in his small tight observations of the world. And in the end, too, a kind of music is allowed to the abbreviated dactylic lines. All in all, it is a noteworthy debut.

HUTCHINSON '78



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DAVID & CHARLES, NEWTON ABBOT

Balladizing on benches

By S. S. Prawer

LEANDER PETZOLD (Editor):
Die freudlose Muse
Texte, Lieder und Bilder zum
historischen Bänkelsang
222pp. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler.
DM32.

Autolycus: Ibero's one to a very
doleful tune. How a usurer's wife
was brought to bed of twenty
money-bags at a burden, and how
she long'd to eat adders' heads
and toads carbonadoed.

Mopsa: Is it true, drink you?
Autolycus: Very true; and hut a
month old.

Dorcas: Bless me from merrying a
usurer!

Autolycus: Here's the midwife's
name to't, one Mistress Tole-
porter, and five or six honest
wives that were present. Why
should I carry lies abroad?

Mopsa: You say you, buy it.

Crown: Come on, lay it by: and
let's first see me belled.

Had Autolycus, the eloping pedlar,
unrolled a picture on a pole and
pointed to its graphic representa-
tion of various episodes in his
belated life. The name, like his
English cognate 'mountebank',
refers to the bench or raised dais
on to which the itinerant singer
sometimes clambered to dominate
his audience more effectively—par-
ticularly at fairs and carnivals
where many counter-attractions had
to be combated.

In Germany, such performers
often worked as a family group;
one member of the family sang and
pointed to the pictures with a large
stick, another turned the hand-
gourd or played some other instru-
ment, a third went among the crowd
and sold the pictures, while the
singer, with explanatory or com-
plementary prolegomena. Their rep-
ertoire and style soon attracted poets
eager to engage the attention of a

more sophisticated public by means
of parody, pastiche, imitation or
variation: Gleim and Bürger in the
eighteenth century, F. Th. Vischer
in the nineteenth, Brecht in the
twentieth. English-speaking readers,
indeed, especially after S. K.
McClure's recently researched *The
'Bänkelsang' and Bertolt Brecht*
(Mouton, 1972), will associate the
art of the *Bänkelsänger* mainly with
Brecht's work in general and *The
Threepenny Opera* in particular.
Professor Petzold, in *Die freudlose
Muse*, lets us see the real thing.

The documents here collected
and reproduced are of four main
kinds. Leander Petzold gives us,
first, depictions of *Bänkelsänger* in
action which range from sixteenth-
century etchings to a photograph
taken in 1936. In the second place
the book shows us specimens of the
crude but alluring pictures to
which the singer pointed as he
sang: paintings mostly divided
into several subsidiary pictures,
illustrating different stages of the
story, grouped around a central,
larger image depicting the principal
character or the most affecting
incident. Third, and most impor-
tant, we are given the texts of many
songs in the itinerant singer's
repertoire, together with their prose
accompaniments and woodcuts.
Lastly, Professor Petzold adds,
sparingly, some additional material
relating to the history of literary
relations between Britain and
Germany.

One gap in this documentation
seems quite unaccountable. Why are
we not vouchsafed a single specimen
of the tunes the *Bänkelsänger* used?
We might, at least, have been given
the tune of "Es wollt ein Mäx-
lein sein". Heine, indeed, in a
sequence of notes which played out
a beautiful part in subsequent lit-
erary history when it became the "Hex-
Wessel-Lied" adopted by the
Nazi Party as its anthem and which
still roared out, even today, at
Nazi meetings in all parts of the
world. It was not only the political
left—Brecht and Brechtman
Silverkrupp and Degenhardt—the
proletariat from the art of the
itinerant singers so well illustrated
in Professor Petzold's anthology.

Pistol politics

By Jeremy Noakes

JAMES M. DIEHL:
Paramilitary Politics in Weimar
Germany
(Kpp. Bloomington: Indiana Uni-
versity Press (distributed by Ameri-
can University Publishers' Group).
1975.

JOHN A. LEONOLD:
Hitler's Campaign
The Radical Nationalist Campaign
to Retain the Weimar Republic
(Kpp. Yale University Press, £12.00).

Columns of men in uniform parading
through the streets were a common
feature of the political landscape in
Weimar Germany. Nor were these
paramilitary formations confined to
the right; the threat posed by the
legions of the right in the post-war
years had prompted the left to
follow suit. By 1933, there was
hardly a major political party in
Germany which did not have a para-
military unit with which it was
associated, quite apart from those
units which remained completely
apolitical.

The war, of course, played a
major part in the militarization of
German society; and yet all ways
that result in such an upsurge of
paramilitary activity during the
peace that follows. More important
than the war itself was the nature of
the political culture in which it
occurred. The roots of the para-
military politics of Weimar lay in
the militarization of pre-war German
society, in the friend-foe dichotomy
of politics, encouraged by Bismarck:
the *Kulturkampf* and the anti-
Socialist Law, and reinforced by the
political "carrots" of the success-
ful generation. These sharp
divisions and conflicts were then
exacerbated by the experiences of
defeat, defeat and revolution; they
in turn took the form simply of
totalitarianism. Feeling their
legitimacy reinforced by million-
years of the streets, the pre-war
units took up arms in maintain-
ing their position. As James M. Diehl
puts it: "paramilitary activity be-
came a surrogate for the
unresolved civil war that followed
the incomplete revolution of 1918".

The paramilitary units exercised
their greatest influence during the
crisis years up to the end of 1923.
In the period of relative stability after
1923 they were forced to come to
terms with a situation in which
paramilitary activities were out of
place. The political arena had
shifted from the streets to the
parliament, the board rooms of the
business, and the committee rooms
of the Reichstag. Yet the paramili-
tary leagues refused to do. They
desperately tried to impose their
candidate on the parties; they
tried to utilize the plebiscitary
forces of the constitution in order
to achieve a new political order.
In a nebulous opposition outside the
party system on the basis of par-
tisan issues. They were largely
defeated, but their actions
helped to pave the way for the
Nazi movement. The Nazis combined
the conventional forms of a political
party with a style which bore more
resemblance to a combat league.
From 1925 to 1933 they helped to sustain
the atmosphere of polarization and
confrontation which provided such
a stimulus to the emergence of
Nazism; they helped to create a
consensus; they helped to
convince people to political vio-
lence until their sensibilities were
completely blunted for them to
share the violence of the Nazi
revolution.

The importance of these para-
military organizations has long been
recognized by historians, and the
topic has been covered in
many books. Professor Diehl's
book represents essentially a sym-
posium of this material. He has him-
self written a number of German
books, but his research (his out-
standing work) is in the history of
the paramilitary movements. Yet this is
not a book of criticism. For he
has not only the equally valuable
historical perspective of the paramili-
tary movements, but also the func-
tional perspective of the paramili-
tary movements throughout the 1920s. The
book is a substantial and well-

written contribution to the study of
Weimar Germany.

Few individuals made a greater
contribution to Hitler's initial suc-
cess than Alfred Hugenberg. Not
only did his press and film empire
help to influence the climate of
opinion in Germany in favour of
extreme rightist views but he him-
self played an important role, first
in the launching of the Young Plan
referendum, and then in the actual
appointment of Hitler as Chancellor.
In many ways Hugenberg forms an
ideal subject for a political biog-
raphy. His political career began
with the setting up of the Para-
military League in 1919, in which he
was a co-founder; it ended in June
1933, five months after Hitler had
come to power, and he played a
major part in right-wing politics
throughout the intervening period.

Yet in other respects Hugenberg
represents a very untypical
subject for a biography. He seems
to have had no intellectual or
cultural interests of any kind.
Able, stubborn, narrow-minded,
not in any biographical sense, but
represented as he represents a
character from the pages of Hic-
cup's Almanac, a warped product of
the warped society of Imperial
Germany. His personality made him
unsuited for the limelight; he was
preeminently an operator behind
the scenes, buying political influ-
ence through the control of news-
papers and donations to political
parties. His problems began when
he felt obliged to come into the
open in order to stop the trend
in the German right towards com-
promise with the Republic. For,
while he succeeded in maintaining
control of the Nationalist Party, in-
stead of creating the right-wing
black which he had envisaged, his
inflexible personality and policies
only encouraged the fragmentation
of the German right, leaving the
Nazis to pick up the pieces.

During the 1920s, for many Ger-
mans in the centre and on the left,
Hugenberg was a symbol for the
most reactionary and plutocratic
form of politics. Yet recent research
has made clear that it is a mistake
to see Hugenberg as the represen-
tative of German industry in gen-
eral or even of the Ruhr in particu-
lar. For, while he retained close
contacts with heavy industry, and
particularly with the coal-mining
sector from which he drew much of
the cash with which he financed
his press and political activities, by
the 1920s he was very much of a
maverick figure. Indeed, so far as
many industrialists were concerned,
with his crude and inflexible
approach he had become a distinct
liability. His role in the actual
appointment of Hitler remains
controversial — part of a broader
controversy over the role of
industry in the downfall of the
Republic.

John A. Leonold's very
thoroughly researched biography
provides much new information
which helps to illuminate Hugen-
berg's role, particularly during
1932-33, but also throughout the
Weimar years. Unfortunately, how-
ever, he tends to avoid the major
controversies, merely referring to
them in his footnotes. He comments
in his preface that "the career of
Hugenberg demonstrates the pluri-
alist boxes of historic development.
Nevertheless, I am sure that my
treatment of certain phenomena
lends support to some Marxist in-
terpretations of these events." This
is not really very helpful, particu-
larly since he does not specify
which points support which inter-
pretation. This is of course some-
thing which other historians can
and will do for themselves, but his
own failure to do so is an indication
of the book's rather narrow scope.
In part, this restricted focus is im-
posed by the biographical form
which he has chosen, but there are
also indications that the author's
grasp of the wider aspects of
the situation is not always so
sure as is his knowledge of
Hugenberg. For example, he
comment that Brüning hoped to
prevent, confine or moderate any
crisis. Hugenberg welcomed crisis
as a fuse to explode democracy —
would not I think, now be accepted
by many historians as the light of
recent research. Hugenberg's
chancellors role and of his memoir
writing rate not without serious
qualification. Thus, while this bi-
ography adds much to our knowledge
of the German right, particularly
during the inter-war years of the Re-
public, its narrow perspective
significantly limits its value, while
its inelegant style makes it less than
a pleasure to read.

Playing to the proletariat

By Martin Esslin

CECIL W. DAVIES:
Theatre for the People
The Story of the Volksbühne
169pp. Manchester University
Press, £4.95.

There has always been a much
closer connection between politics
and culture in Germany than in
this country. Marx and Engels
wanted to change the structure of
society in order to give the
exploited classes access to the
fruits of labour and civiliza-
tion, namely, the finest achieve-
ments of poetry. As the highest
form of poetry, according to Aris-
totle, was tragedy, that entailed
giving them the works of Shake-
speare, Goethe and Schiller. One of
Hitler's grounds for exterminating
the Jews was that they were inca-
pable of ever being truly creative,
of writing works like those of
Shakespeare, Goethe and Schiller.

Political movements in Germany
have therefore always striven to
develop a cultural branch. The
Volksbühne movement, subject of
Cecil W. Davies' admirably clear
and concise study, emerged in 1899
as one of the cultural offshoots of
the Social Democratic movement.
This was a time when censorship
and the revolution of a bourgeois
public had drawn attention to
the revolutionary potential of
naturalism, the current avant-
garde trend in drama. Created at
first to support special machine
performances of plays of that ilk,
the movement grew into a mass
organization of Social Democrats
and hence, it was hoped, work-
ing-class theatre-goers, which ul-
timately not only produced its own
performances but also, by block-
booking whole theatres, provided a
wide variety of theatre tickets at
greatly reduced prices to its mem-
bers.

The often stormy history of this
movement which split and re-united,
was suppressed by the Nazis, and
re-emerged after the war in a
divided Berlin in a Western and an
Eastern version, is sketched by
Mr Davies with sympathy but also
with sufficient detachment not to
be drawn into the factionalism
which marks most German accounts
of the story. He has thus provided
not only the most comprehensive
but also the most complete (and
yet concise) study of the subject
available in any language. It is cer-
tainly a subject which deserves
attention: one has only to think of
the adverse experience Arnold
Weber has had with the brave, idios-
yncratic Centre 42 to see
how much he could have profited
from a thorough knowledge of the
very different yet parallel develop-
ments outlined in this book.

The lessons of the Volksbühne
are by no means all positive: see
the membership of the organization
increased, its ideological commit-
ment tended to wane and the busi-
ness of managing what became in
effect a vast ticket agency (which
eventually owned its own theatre
as well as selling seats in a large
variety of other venues) became
more and more important. Nor did
the Volksbühne ever really carry
high-theatrical culture to the broad
working-class masses. In 1965-66,
for example, the proportion of
"craftsmen and manual workers"
among the new members joining
the West Berlin Volksbühne was
no more than 15 per cent — and this
figure must have included a high
proportion of "craftsmen" that is
the very highly skilled work-
men employed in carpentry and
other who are small entrepreneurs,
rather than proletarians in the
Marxist sense. It has, in fact, been
clear for a long time now that the
Volksbühne always tended to
attract the top stratum of work-
ing-class people, namely those who
were successfully emerging from
the working class into the petty
bourgeoisie.

The Volksbühne indeed raises the
whole question of a potential work-
ing-class culture: the culture to
which the working-class system
being essentially the product of the
ruling class. Hence, after all, the
paradox of the social criticism
and elitist of all art forms, ballet,
opera, and the like, which have
become the apex and prize
exhibit of Soviet culture, not to
mention the adoption of the most
bourgeois representational style of
painting as the official socialist art.
Has not the same fate overtaken
Brecht, the leading advocate of a
new Marxist proletarian aesthetic
in the theatre? Twenty-two years
after his death he is performed in
front of solemn audiences in the
West. Sunday suits both in East and
West Germany, a classic and as
much part of an establishment cul-
ture as Goethe and Schiller.

Mr Davies has produced a work
of admirable scholarship. Among
the few slips that might be con-
sidered in a new edition I should
like to point to the misreading of
Habba's *Maria Magdalena* (1964);
and Werner Kraus did not
play the part of Jew Süss but
was played by Ferdinand Marnett,
while Kraus played all the other
parts in the film, crowds of them.
In fact, a fact which was a victory
proof of the actor's ability to
assume hundreds of faces, but was
exceedingly rarely mentioned.

The career of the poet and dramatist
Ernst Toller began in the
Bavarian world of the early
expressionist movement. But
his friendship with the
dancer, helped him to find his
way to a new form of expression,
the political propaganda play,
which, like the political propaganda
leading role in the theatre, after
Munich soviet republic, Toller
was released from detention. He
continued to work, as he did
in a Nazi concentration camp, until
his death in 1939. Berlin, 1939.
D.M.50 offers a very valuable
selection of his work, particu-
larly his essays, and his
journal *Kain* and *Panel* (1939).



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Fontane and the novelist's art

By Erich Heller

Let me begin by quoting Theodor Fontane's *Years of my Childhood*, which appeared in 1894 when he was seventy-five years old—his great novel *Effi Briest* was to be published the following year:

"It is not far from the osuery of the Rhine, in the region—roughly—between Toulouse and Montpellier, where the western border of the Casagne meets the foothills of the Cévennes. This relatively small part of the earth was the homeland of my ancestors, both from my father's and mother's side. They lived in neighbouring districts, and because two profoundly different kinds of people exist within this narrow space, it surely is not surprising that 'mes ancêtres' reflect these differences. They persisted in my parents despite the fact that their families, long since, had transplanted themselves into the Mark Brandenburg. My father was a delicate, impressive Gascon, full of *bonhomie*, fond of telling stories and, when he was completely at ease, tall stories—'Cascannades'. My mother, on the other hand, was a child of the southern Cévennes, a slender, delicate woman with black hair, eyes like coal, energetic, restless, a strong character and of so passionate a nature that my father used to say of her: 'If she had stayed where she came from, the wars of the Cévennes would range to this very day'."

By the "wars of the Cévennes" Fontane père meant the uprisings, in 1638, of the Huguenots (although his wife was far from being a religious fanatic). Fontane rightly called *Years of my Childhood* an autobiographical novel, for his family had become a large estate, one German after Jacques François Fontaine, a Calvinist who manufactured stockings in Nîmes, left France in 1634 and settled in Germany.

Fontane's grandfather was the first officially to drop the "i" in "Fontaine". He had a successful career in the courts of the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II and Queen Louise. A contemporary court diarist wrote of him: "A Herr Fontaine, painter by trade, has become Chamberlain secretary of the Queen; he paints badly, but speaks French well." His grandson, born in 1819, did not enjoy such linguistic distinction: his French was poor. True, Fontane's father, son of the bad painter and his second wife, a Westphalian woman, was christened Louis Henri, but as the emperor's son-in-law, he was the emperor's son-in-law, who had inherited but badly overused "Henri" as his first Christian name, he must have had neglected French in his rather improvised oylhouse. Although the family pronounced the name without sound in the "a", the French casual pronunciation was heard only "on Sundays and holidays", as Theodor Fontane's son once remarked. This son, Friedrich, was to become his father's publisher.

The sketchy account of Fontane's genealogy seems worryingly lacking, for too much has been made of his "purely" French descent—whether in explaining his literary art, in accordance with political fashion, justifying his neglect. The fact is that there is nothing "pure" in his family history. At the same time it is very strange that the most "Gallie" among the German writers of the late nineteenth century had such tenuous links with the French language. But also with French literature. It would be useless to seek a place for him in a literary mode fashioned by Stendhal, Balzac, and Flaubert; and this is not a matter of comparative importance, but of essential difference. The truth is that Germany's first modern realist novelist before Thomas Mann (first not in time—for well, yes, there were Freytag and Schopenhauer and Gutzkow—but in rank) would read the books of his French predecessors or contemporaries. He read them of all, in German translation, and this despite his father's veneration of Napoleon. Old Fontane, an apothecary, had a love of the legend, and the adventures which were altogether excessive. It took the form of gambling and led to his bourgeois Waterloo, he lost his pharmacy to Swindlers by the Battle of Sedan (where he had moved from Mönchengladbach to the Mark Brand-)

denburg, birthplace of his son Theodor), and finally also lost his wife, who left him because she could not bear the perpetual threat of financial ruin.

One of the history lessons young Henri Theodor received from his father took the form of an enacted scene in which the father played the part of a flank man in a Napoleonic military detachment while the boy was the commanding officer. "La Tour d'Auvergne", the son would call out, and father, standing to attention, would answer in his loudest, most pompous voice: "Il est posé ici!" "Où est-il donc?" "Il est posé sur le champ d'honneur." This, it was well known, was how La Tour's comrades, by daily repeating the scene, honoured the memory of the man who came to be called "le premier grenadier de France". Theodor Fontane would never forget such instruction, neither its subjects nor its morbidness, and would come to detest the dry pedantry of orthodox schooling.

The most moving chapter of *Years of my Childhood* describes his lost visit to his father's solitary house in the country, when the old man talked about his school days in Nourpupin:

"I was embarrassed sometimes how much more I knew than the teachers, except of course about Horace and the irregular verbs. There was, for instance, old Starko. His hobby horse was Aristotle, and what Aristotle had long since forgotten, Starko knew. But what really mattered, that he didn't know. Our school teach us the wrong way, nobody could convince me that this isn't so. People don't learn what they ought to learn."

If this is a truthful report of his father's words, those about "our schools" are at the same time surely Fontane's own.

Napoleon and La Tour notwithstanding, old Fontane's heroes were not necessarily French. At least

one was Prussian. In another passage of *Years of my Childhood*—this time it is a childhood memory—Fontane describes his father's living-room in Swinemünde. The sofa was its most important piece of furniture—at least to the apothecary himself, who would lie down on it for his prolonged after-dinner naps (a habit that no doubt contributed to the failure of the pharmacy). Above the sofa there hung a much-treasured heirloom: an engraving with the caption "Fédéric le Grand restaurant à Soust, après les manœuvres de Potsdam, accompagné de ses généraux". It was, apparently, a very sound sleep that was guarded by so dependable a warrior; and young Fontane stood before this picture again and again, gazing intently into the eyes of the Prussian King, "with a premonition, perhaps, that he would become my own favourite hero."

Napoleon and Frédéric le Grand (in the King's name), France and Prussia, "Fontaine" and Brandenburg: there is nothing unusual in this combination—however surprising it may seem in other contexts. In the French colony in Prussia to which the Fontanes belonged it was commonplace. This French colony—the most important concentration in Germany of the Calvinist French expatriates, the Huguenots—came into being in 1635 when Friedrich Wilhelm, Grand Elector of Brandenburg, opened his country to the French refugees who fled after Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes of 1598. They were even treated in a privileged way and developed into a state within the state, culturally and economically prosperous and politically loyal.

Fontane, who jokingly exaggerated by saying that every third Berliner was a Frenchman, described the members of the colony as puritanically stiff, earnest

and ambitious—more Prussian than the Prussians. He might have said in puritanical cliché what he gave by his excessively negative impressions of the French. His true home in a poem he wrote in 1885 to celebrate the hundredth birthday of the French colony. He was then sixty-six and his masterpieces, the novels *Effi Briest* and *Der Stechlin*, were still to be written.

Before his belated liberation as a writer, his professional career was varied and successful. To come to the point, he postponed for five years marrying the woman to whom he got engaged in 1845 and also reproached himself for making her life so uncomfortable. What, then, was his profession? One may well ask. To begin with, he followed in his father's footsteps and was apprenticed to several apothecaries. But he knew that this could not be for life. He devoted his spare time, illicitly extended now and then, to writing. He wrote every genre: poetry, story, epic, journalism. His early belletristic productions brought him the attention of some of the literary celebrities in Berlin (none of them destined to stay in the rank in German literary history). Fontane was early and safely assigned to him and he was invited to join a literary circle, whimsically called "The Tunnel above the Spree" (the Spree being Berlin's river). There the young apothecary recited his first ballads which were faithfully modeled on the German classics of the genre by Bürger and Schiller and Goethe. He was greatly esteemed at "The Tunnel" and through its members came to know many literary personalities.

In 1844 he was invited by a wealthy friend to join him on a trip to England. During two years in London he was in a state of perpetual enchantment and never quite recovered from it. Not even moving criticism of England's social conditions, an indignation widespread and culminating a year later in Friedrich Engels's book about the miserable conditions of the English proletariat, could damp his enthusiasm for the country where he breathed the air of the great world and of political freedom. Although he was responsible for the *causerie*, the conversational lightness, no French writer had any strong influence on him, certainly none that would be comparable to the impression made by Shakespeare, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens or Byron. Leaving aside the almost as important as that of the Mark Brandenburg, that in the years the ballads of Scotland and the history and landscapes of England would play in forming his imagination.

He was to visit England again in 1855. It seemed that he might settle there permanently. Six years before he had abandoned his uncoincidental and tedious career as a pharmacist and married the order to finance his political life. He accepted a position in the "Literary Cabinet", the central agency for controlling the press set up within the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. He obtained a highly paid position in the cabinet (he would later refer to it as having sold himself despite the fact that the Berlin correspondent of the liberal *Dresdener Zeitung* supplied the Saxony newspaper with "horror stories" of the cabinet's role in the honest and law-abiding Prussian army. When the cabinet rejected one of his articles in the *Zeitung*, he wrote to the editor of the old Prussian military newspaper: "I am not a member of the cabinet, but I am a member of the cabinet's cabinet."

If we remember that he played the revolutionary on the Berlin barricades in May 1848, it is somewhat confused and self-described with considerable honesty and in vain to break through a church of Protestantism and the bells and thus begin with the "all great events of the world" that day he seized a gun from the stage properties of an underground theatre (it was probably

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"fifteen years before in the popular comedy *Seven Girls in a Farm*" and filled it with so much powder that it became blacker rather than looser, and how in the midst of the turmoil his father arrived and the two went to drink coffee in a peaceful garden restaurant—if we remember all this, without omitting the less facetious journalistic contributions he made in the time to the revolutionary cause, we can understand why he earned the reputation of an unschmeißer Künstler. But his love of Prussia—the "good Prussia"—was unshakable, and so was his admiration of England despite the sobering effect that the years spent in the country (from September 1855 until January 1859) had upon his initial enthusiasm. Again he had moved in an official capacity: as the founder and director of a German-English Press Office, a Prussian propaganda centre, he lasted only six months, but Fontane remained in England as the foreign correspondent of a variety of German newspapers.

Years of uncertainty, restlessness and failure followed upon his return to Berlin in 1859; yet he gradually emerged as a literary figure. His biggest work to date was his novel *Die Frau Brandenburger* in the belief that this austere portrait of the German lands, with its richly romantic history, had not yet found its "singer". The "song" was to become longer and longer, until in 1882 it filled four volumes. What he later said of the style of that book applies to many more of his writings—as it does in the works of his Anatolian counterpart Adalbert Stifter:

"It was my proud intention to describe the seemingly most insignificant things with the greatest precision and thus to raise them to a certain artistic level, indeed to make them interesting by means of the kind of simplicity and transparency that appears to be easy but is in fact difficult to achieve." During the years after his return from London, he also published the journalistic exploits of his "travel-songs" in *Britannien*, *England und Beyond the Tweed*, but he could still not afford to become "a free lancer" in a rooming in respectability, he said, next to being a "travelling salesman"; and so, in 1860, he eventually joined the staff of the arch-conservative *Berlin Kreuzzeitung*, a journal that Nietzsche regarded as "representing the most German spirit of its time."

Yet Fontane later justified this alliance by saying that "all serious people who show independence, consistency, character, and (I don't mind) a little funniness and obstinacy—that all such people are, in the end, the same." Before long, however, his own conservatism ceased to be dependable. He felt "chained" to the *Kreuzzeitung*, and in a letter to his wife it made his apprehensive of another great work of economic instability called the newspaper intolerable "brutal", masking with Christian rhetoric his own "inhumanity". And indeed he left the *Kreuzzeitung* in 1870 to become the drama critic of the more liberal *Vossische Zeitung*.

In this new role he, the descendant of French Protestants, courageously rejected a play of the family established and all but unassailable Karl Gutzkow on the grounds of the author's crude anti-Catholicism. And although, in his very first review, he had approvingly written of the patriotic demonstrations with which an audience, cheerfully ready for the war against France responded to the national liberation oratory of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, he later predicted that the play would be one of the most notorious scandals of the Berlin theatre: Gerhart Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenaufgang*. Thus Fontane the critic helped to inaugurate the nationalist revolution in German drama.

Fontane's work as a critic, hardly begun, was interrupted by his short but eventful trip as a reporter to the French theatre of war, where he was arrested in October 1870. He was suspected of being a Prussian spy, but soon released as the intervention of the same "war" he was back to his seat in the Berlin theatre. Prior to *War* is the literary product of his martial adventures. It is free of any chauvinism, so much so that it became the first book of Goethe's to be translated into French.

But he was still not simply a man of literature. Only after a brief but momentous appointment as first secretary of the Berlin Academy of Arts did he decide that he could no longer play any part in the "totally confused machinery" of the state or its more or less official representations; and only then, in the autumn of 1871, did he choose to leave the career of an independent writer.

"The novel", he said in the autumn of that decisive year, "is my only solace to these disconcerting days. . . . Working at it, I know for sure that I cannot be anything else but a writer. . . . The historical novel in question, *Verden Sturm* (Before the Storm), a work of lung ventilation, was hardly received as overwhelming promise of great novelistic genius. Its subject is an episode from the uprising of 1812-13, and the novel is a "religious, moral and patriotic". The author himself tells us so. Who would have expected such unambiguously pious sentiments from the loyal son of a Napoleon-besotted family from a writer who, after his "prostitution" in the service of the Prussian "Literary Cabinet" and the "religious, moral and patriotic" *Kreuzzeitung*, had at last asserted his freedom? But he also described the theme of the novel as "a more subtle and important theme, a great idea, a great moment, brooks into very simple human conditions." The delineations of "simple human conditions" did not meet with universal approval. One influential critic found it all rather silly. Dramatic tension he asked? Perhaps; but only if one is prepared patiently to wait for resolutions brought about by an outburst in a coach, or by laying the table, or by retiring to bed.

Certainly, such "simplicities" may be too simple, but the theme itself, just as the historical subject, is reminiscent of *War and Peace*, and although clashes between the commonplaces and "the great moment" are not new in the literature of the nineteenth century, this theme, by virtue of his temperament and his disposition, is Fontane's very own, just as it was Goethe's, and there is something Chokhovian in this citizen of the Mark Brandenburg, son of the apothecary from Nourpupin and Swinemünde. (As Fontane himself said, he was a "decade and a half older" than the hero of the novel, and the heroic character of the sufferer, it has become one of the most terrible themes of the epoch.)

After *Vor dem Sturm* there were to be many more novels and novellas, fourteen, to be exact. When the first novel of his new work, freedom appeared in 1878, Fontane was fifty-nine. At the time of *Unwiederbringlich* (Irretrievable), his most accomplished novella, he was seventy-three—and his greatest work was still to come. This is very probably unique in the history of literature. Fontane's novel of adulthood, *Effi Briest*, appeared in the same year as *Die Poggenpuhl*: in 1894, when Fontane was 77. It seems hardly credible that *Effi Briest* was written by so old a man, and clear that Fontane could not possibly have written it when he was younger. For in his younger days he was given to voicing keen convictions and having "opinions", different ones at different times. The unschmeißer Kantianist held no belief for any length of time, and sometimes not even the same beliefs at the same moment. What has been said of him is true: that there is no protagonist in the weaving world of politics who could not look for support to one or other of Fontane's many contradictory utterances.

"The bourgeois is terrible", he would say, and go on to praise the proletariat for being incomparably more genuine, more vital and more truthful. It depends with what he said every so often muttered to himself:

In *Effi Briest* it is certainly Fontane himself speaking for at least the part of himself that is irretrievably Prussian—when Fontane, *Effi Briest's* husband, in making up his mind to challenge Crampas, his wife's lover, insists on the necessity of the social order being protected by the power of established morality. Yes, Fontane himself—or what is left of the self once it has withdrawn, leaving the stage to the interplay of opposing forces and convictions. But has this ever really and literally been a "novel"? Or is it something like this only an aesthetic fiction, a parody? Is not most literature technique, criticism of life? And if

manipulation of style as a violation of truth, the truth that comes to light through "revolution" in art as well as in politics. And revolutions, he writes, "are usually initiated by the rubble, by adventures, or by machines". Yet instantly he exclaims: "But what would have become of us without revolutions?" And this is the same Fontane who wrote time before he pronounced that there cannot be any social order without the masses being kept down by fear or religion, by the regime of powerful governments, secular or ecclesiastical: "Any attempt to do without the great overburden of the world", he concluded, "can safely be regarded as having failed once and for all."

In other words, Fontane was a hurr novelist, even if who birth took place rather late in his life. What, then, did the art of the novel and the Prussian years teach him that he had not learned as a journalist, as an author of travelogues, or even as a poet? He himself rather unhelpfully believed that it was respect for what is rather than a hankering for what might be, the honest positive readiness to let life speak for itself rather than tell it how it should behave, to allow every character—not, the right to his own deeds and convictions, but the terribly unquestionable privilege of his existence.

Fontane discovered that he was a novelist when after years of uncomfortably upholding contradictory ideologies he arrived at the point of describing by two money, who confessed that he always felt lost when challenged to say what he himself felt or believed about this or that, without being given the chance of shifting the responsibility to the exchanges, the dialectic of imaginary characters: "As for myself, it has always seemed to me that I might just as well, and with equal right, maintain the opposite of what I was saying." This is almost word for word what one of Fontane's most impressive and most lovable creations, Dubravka Schellin in *Der Stechlin*, says after having ventured a definite opinion: "And if I had said the opposite, it would be equally true", which does not prevent the old man from being obstinately and delightfully sure about certain principles he holds. Still, it was Goethe who said that the perfect character has no character. It has as much delight in concealing an ego as an Imogene. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet. The "chameleon" in the poet did show Kleist's regard, for instance, and in one of the greatest literary dramas of literary history—Tolstoy.

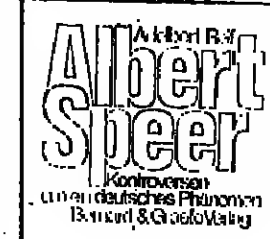
Dubravka's words in *Der Stechlin* are Fontane's own: "And if I had said the opposite, it would be equally true." To be sure this would be incongruous and even perverse when uttered by the theatre critic or by one responsible for moral or political decisions—but it is "dialectically", "metaphysically" true in the mouth of one who is about to become a very considerable novelist. It is this Erkenntnis, the knowledge, that Fontane meant when he quoted Goethe's saying of the good poet and writer that his works reflect not some vague and partial intuition, but the measure of his knowing insight? Is it his own mind that critic into a novelist, into a writer who said of his art that it was "psychography and critique" and, coming from the dark ground of creativity, was "ordered, pruned and trimmed in the sobering light of day"? Very likely. It was the *Erkenntnis*—Turgenev's insight—that the truth of a novel, of any work of art, is far beyond the truths of convictions and opinions. These are at all times mere fragments within the ultimate justification of the whole—or indeed its essentialness: ("Was soll der Unsinn?" "What on earth is it all about?"—was what Fontane's soul every so often muttered to itself.)

In *Effi Briest* it is certainly Fontane himself speaking for at least the part of himself that is irretrievably Prussian—when Fontane, *Effi Briest's* husband, in making up his mind to challenge Crampas, his wife's lover, insists on the necessity of the social order being protected by the power of established morality. Yes, Fontane himself—or what is left of the self once it has withdrawn, leaving the stage to the interplay of opposing forces and convictions. But has this ever really and literally been a "novel"? Or is it something like this only an aesthetic fiction, a parody? Is not most literature technique, criticism of life? And if



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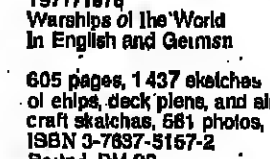
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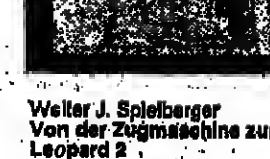
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In a pearl-hoot o little boy howls,
And on anxious woman calls from the bank.
But the man releases one small tropped foot
And pushes forward on his pilgrimoge,
Beut on reeking Triebtschen

Fairer bellows,
He moves like o juggernaut, Sheer gold-lust!
Self-made monster! Yet his body contains
Such wells of understanding, the save veins
Knotted with brutality.

On the boize
Mock O-Level results. Mocking display!
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At his heart
He wears her picture, love's insignia,
Inscribed Steffi. Vergissmichnicht. No good.
He has quite forgotten inert amongst
The gumpit spelt, sprawling under the sun.
And reading of this in controlled grave words,
A student for the first time apprehends
Love's force, the force of war, and time defused.
By o poem.

Wenn me pine
Seoce gedeyon, pine seldcymes,
Mureende mod.

Passenger in transit,
Slumped in an airport lounge. He is dreaming,
You can tell that. Links, associations?
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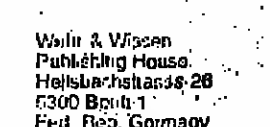
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Yet there is an important difference. For while Fontaine's sympathy and affection lie with tradition, he knows only too well his historical fragility and ethical dubiousness. It is this sturdy and morally objectionable, and in so far as this is so, it is the detriment of their artistic rank. This was certainly not so—or not simply so—in the case of Fontaine. Hence his social criticism is far more vigorous than that of Zola and Shaw. It is as if the critic stood and drill for a while before he leaves behind the old, just as someone departing from a well accustomed place might, however many things he has to leave behind, and with what tears in his eyes as it vanishes from view.

Therefore, with Fontaine, it is an extreme victory of the novelist's art when a character who speaks the author's mind (or speaks what was the author's mind just before he wrote it) is at the same time denied the reader's sympathy; when the author's sympathy is lost to his emotions away from the man whom he deems to be in the right (or did so before the novel took shape). It is what happened to Tolstoy—in a much more acute distress of spirit—when his angelic Anna Karenina's death compelled him to leave to God the judgment that he himself, in his novel, had intended to pass on Anna Karenina's sin. In both cases this rout of moral righteousness at the hands of the artist is a triumph. The sin is often to excess of that artistic objectivity—the objectivity of Nature herself—as it has been stated with grim brilliance by Schopenhauer: "Nature," he said, "does not see as we writers do, when she looks at a murderer or a fool, and set about it so full of clumsy purpose that behind every such figure we see, too, writer himself disavowing their minds and words, not warbling with a raised finger: 'This is a murderer, a fool, do not listen to what he says.'"

Fontaine, in his engagingly modest way goes beyond them. Do listen to Inaustraton's words, be seems to say, but don't like him. (Thomas Mann, who in more than one way is much indebted to Fontaine, accomplished the same in *Die Buddenbrooks* with his famous pair of antagonists: Nophio who to nearly always right and nearly always objectionable, and Senterbirn, who, by comparison, is shallow and nearly always likable.)

In the sixteenth chapter of *Forner's Years of My Childhood*, dealing with the death of his father, the future which tells of the son's last visit to his father, there occurs a scene which is not only, like the whole chapter, deeply moving but in its apparently fortuitous way, also to a large extent, a study in moral problems. The old man, engagingly chattering away, suddenly comes upon the very thing which must have caused him continual moral uneasiness—his professional and social connection with the law, and also for gambling, his inability to support his family.

"Please, Father, let's not talk about it. Don't you know that it is so sweet to have you home?"

"Maybe to you, but not to your mother."

"She has put up with it."

"Put up with it? You see, my boy, that's the way of accusing me. You accuse me of not being right. This is what I tell myself, day after day."

"You expect too much to hear from Father. It's harder for you than for us."

"Possibly, possibly. And it would have been harder if Father also felt that way. It's the circumstances that make the man."

"I remember your saying this even when we were still children. And it is certainly right."

"Yes, right it is. But I don't think quite but only mind about something but more entirely."

"A little but not entirely."

and circumstance this is the universe of the novelist, the definition of his art. At the height of his power was Fontane's ambition that every thing presented in his novels should be "natural and necessary," which Schopenhauer demanded of great literature. Fontane even went one step farther: one should not be aware of the influence of the moral. It was his intention that differences between "big" and "small" or "good" and "bad," were not to be evidenced with particular emphasis. "The main thing," he wrote, "is reality," "the circumstances,"

Famous people with Stelzer's voice when in a letter he confessed that he did not think highly of such differences; he treats with the same affection every particle of "reality," and even says: "If it so happens that I come upon something really great, I come upon something really small." Greatness speaks for itself. It needs no artistic support to make an effect." Although this aesthetic mood is appealing, it is nonsensical—as appealing and nonsensical as Stelzer's misquoted assertion that "the romantic aimed at the dramatic Heibel and his Hegelian theme of historical grandeur" that the eruption of a volcano is not "greater" than a milk-pan boiling over; for both are expressions of the same natural law. There would be no *Oedipus*, no *Oedipus*, no *Oedipus*, no *Leier* and no *Prinz*—if poets had heeded the implied prescription. Rather were they inclined to obey Nietzsche's injunction that great things they ought to speak greatly and for the sake of the great emotion when it comes to the Zarathustra (tone of Nietzsche himself).

But what Fontane wrote probably had in mind is that beloved and utopian principle of "equal poetic justice" for all things, the principle of Realism itself, in this declared-but-never-fully-accepted, and therefore impracticable-radicalism. Fontane went so far as to question the reputation of a celebrated Realist writer of the epoch—Gottfried Keller—enjoyed by the Swiss, and admitted, the Swiss writer did have "style" in the sense that he was unable to write a line that would not instantly be recognized as his. Yet Fontane meant "style" in the sense that he refused to believe that the style of a work was truly only if it was "objective," that is, the more it was the object itself which appeared to boy want to be "styleless" and "unadorned," called by the puritans of the day "prosaic" or "idiotic" or "crises of the author's manner."

If this were so, indeed if this could possibly be achieved by any style, Fontane himself would be the orchid-immer. It has even been said—by an admirer of Fontane's—that his last novel, *Steppen* (he was writing it when he was 70), was "it" is so riotous in old-age "stunlog," and the "method" the "style," the "Fontane tone" an omnipresence that the contours of individual characters are hopelessly blurred. But this is not so. Fontane easily exchanges many roles without effecting the organization or disorganization of the work. This is not true. For the characters of the novel are, for all indistinguishability, clearly their characteristics are sharply defined for the sake of their harmonization.

The musical adjustment is not out of place. The music, for which the *Dar Stachel* was written are those of a chamber orchestra. No doubt, louder, more, "characteristic" effects can be produced by trombones and kettledrums, but this is not to deny that to finer ears the violé d'emoce has a distinct presence. The violé d'emoce is distinguished from the sound of theiddle. A year before his death in 1886, Fontane described the novel to his publisher as "unweissenflich." In the end old men dies and two young people marry—this is about all that happens in 500 pages. When he turned to him, we saw that the novel was not so (ano even placed an admiring exclamation mark behind the words: "Die Maechel").

indeed, it is the indefinable quality of its "manufacture", the love, the verbal music, the very living and humming of wisdom that transforms the most banal instances (two of them) into a world of wisdom, a discernible order that carries within itself a whole ensemble of aesthetic and ethical discriminations. The circumstances (which according to Heidegger, cannot be blamed for everything's existence) are not, as you say, "not to allow and not to be allowed to feel" entirely different. They would feed off their own "being" and "not-being".

The federal preference

By D. C. Watt

SILVER LIPGENS :
 Die Anfänge der Europäischen
 Einigungspolitik 1948-1950 -
 Herausg. : Ernest Klett.

of the areas that the relentless march of the thirty-year war should now be opening to his scholarship is the early history of the European movement. Churchill made his great Zurich speech calling for "a kind of Europe" in November 1946, thirty years ago. It was in February following year that the federalist group of the House of Commons was formed and in December 1947 those famous MEPs assembled in a chamber of the House of Commons to discuss the principle of European integration. The policy may be constructed according to the principle of European integration. It is a group which included Winston Churchill, Lord Foot, Lord Manning, Barbara Castle, Sir Silverman and W. N. Werbyey. It is some thirty years since the first Labour MEPs, fifty-three in all, were elected. Liberal and Conservative Members of the House of Commons, the Party Europe Group to the European Federation of Europe.

At the time the British end of the enterprise failed. Ernest Bevin's great plan for a united Europe, to be linked to the United States in an alliance (anticipating more than a decade the "two pillars" concept of NATO current in the Kennedy era), came to nothing when the British and Americans split over the Marshall plan and the European Economic Community; another factor was Britain's unhappy experience with the OEEC and the European Payments Union. And the ferment of a military activity, the outburst of a socialist threatened by official capitalism, and the accommodation of the establishment of the Council of Europe, has come to be dismissed (and largely forgotten) as

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yet another of those outbursts of middle-class, London-based internationalism which are apt to surface monetarily on the troubled surface of British politics, bubble to the top and then disappear without a trace.

From the vantage point of the 1970s, with Britain securely part of the European Community, with substantial parts of British politics and

Föderationsidee 1945-1947, which fleshed largely with the ferment of the postwar optimism, is to be followed by *Der Aufstieg der Bewegung in der Politik 1948-50*, the completion of which must await the 1980s, when at least the British, German and Dutch archives for those years will be open to research. So there is time still to reflect on Professor Lipguss's first volume.

of British relations with the external world acclaimed in Europe, with the fact that a European parliament is only a year away from its birth, and this disclaimer of the false starts of the late 1940s will have to be evaluated after once again, both at the level of the official policy in Brussels and at the parliamentary and opinion-making level in Britain.

This is equally true of the parallel developments in France, West Germany, the Benelux countries and Italy, the original six signatories of the Treaty of Rome. It is true, too, of the movements in the less committed states of Europe, Switzerland and Scandinavia. Such a collective enterprise, however, has just been launched, with the decision taken in September 1977 by a group of scholars drawn from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Belgium, and meeting at the new European University Institute at Florence, to publish a collection of documents, and, unofficially, to cover the development of the movement towards a united Europe from 1940 to 1950.

The ascle and the collective nature of the enterprise is such that it is unlikely to be repeated for several years. So it is worth calling the attention of British historians to the pioneer work of Walter Lippens, the German historian, who is one of the moving spirits behind this work; the more worthwhile because the first volume of *Die Anfänge der Europäischen Einigungspolitik 1945-1950* has so far passed largely unnoticed in this country. The editor of this considerable volume of the *Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster* Professor Lippens has done in British papers and in interviewing British survivors from those days. His first volume, *Krise und Neuformierung der*

As a historian of the idea of European unity, however, Professor Lipgens is a mine of information and enlightenment. He sees the rise of the idea, the progress of which among the various strands of European resistance to Hitler he documented in his earlier work *Europa - Föderationspläne der Widerstandsbewegungen, 1940-1945* (Munich 1968), as the reaction of Europeans conscious of the unique European cultural tradition to the rise of the superpower, the Soviet encroachment on Eastern Europe and the catastrophe which the destruction wrought in the last European civil war brought upon Europe even at the moment of liberation. He sees the idea of European unity as a movement of the inter-war years 1917-19, and of the disasters that were to come; and he shows how the idea took strongest root where European tradition had most triumphed, as a reaction to the upsurge of the worst side of European political society and tradition.

From this he traces the presence of strong European federalist groups in 1945 in Italy, Switzerland, France, and The Netherlands and its early stirrings in occupied Germany. However, it is the cooperation between the wartime superpowers steadily degenerated in the year between Potsdam and the Paris peace conference, and the lack of a common vision between what looked perilously like the progenitors of a new world war. In which even the ashes of Europe would be consumed, grew and developed into the European Community. Britain, Luxembourg and Beale. And he shows how Churchill's great call for European unity at Zurich transformed these first stumbling moves into a first step towards the foundation of the international coordinating committee in the winter of 1947 to prepare The Hague Conference of 1948. The Council of Europe was eventually to spring.

All this he paints against the background of the onset of the Cold War, the proclamation of the Truman doctrine, the beginnings of the Marshall plan, the hostile Soviet

reaction and the foundation of the Churchillism. A number of dissenting views however largely missing: that of the military (he omits the formation of the Brussels Treaty of March 1948 entirely from the story); that of the second world war, in which the German Problem was the focus of London and Paris; that of United States power as seen from London and Paris; that of overseas empire, that Britain was by no means the only imperial power, and that the ruling overseas empire in which European settlers played a major role and finally that of economic weakness and lack of capital, the major barrier. Bevin pleaded again and again to the United States by means of that leadership of Europe so often urged upon him.

Much more could be said; but not now. But to illustrate Bevin's vision of European unity, it is worth quoting from his message to the Americans of January 1948, printed in a volume of American diplomatic documents not available when Professor Llygane completed his first volume:


It is not enough to reinforce the physical barriers which still guard our Western civilization. We must also organize and consolidate the ethical and spiritual forces inherent in this Western civilization. . . . This in my view can only be done by creating some form of a union in Western Europe . . . backed by the American and the Dominions.

I believe therefore that we should seek to form with the backing of the Americans not the Dominions or Western democratic system comprising Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France, Italy, Greece and possibly Portugal. As soon as circumstances permit we should, of course, also wish to include Spain and Germany without whom no Western system can be complete. . . . I believe, therefore, that the moment is ripe for a conference of Western Europe. . . . We in Britain are not content with outside Europe and insist that our problems and positions are quite separate from those of our European neighbours. . . .

The policy I have outlined will require a lead from us . . . , what I called a spiritual union of the West . . .

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I do not know whether to call it great nonsense or great fun or both... My interest was held throughout by speculation as to the true character of the 21-year-old heroine and a baffled wonder as to how the author was going to end his plot... I must leave you to find out for yourselves. *Munk Gilman in the Irish Times.*

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Shocking the Socialists

By Peter Gay

ALEX HALL: Social Democracy, Scandal, and Social History. The SPD Press and Wilhelmine Germany 1890-1914. 267pp. Cambridge University Press. £9.

Since the collapse of the Nazi tyranny in 1945, and for obvious, imperative reasons, historians of modern Germany have earnestly, sometimes frantically, searched for the reasons why the land of Goethe and Beethoven should have degenerated into the land of Hitler and Eichmann. There has been a rash of onologists, to be sure, who blamed the advent of the Third Reich on such generalities—which is in fact the German phenomenon of industrialization and mass politics, but their pathetic, often repellent, efforts have been swamped by the more inspiring investigations of historians like Karl Dietrich Bracher and by the energy of a highly critical school—Hans-Ulrich Wehler is only the best-known among them—who have sought, and found, the roots of the Nazi infection in the area of the German Empire, the land of Bismarck and Wilhelm II. These rich minefields have been at their disposal: the painful alliance of Junkers and industrialists, the anxious for commercial, diplomatic, and military hegemony, the megalomaniac pretensions of Wilhelm II, and, earlier, more demagogic still, the divisive politics of Bismarck. Looking back in the midst of war and near the end of the Empire, Max Weber, in a famous indictment that Alex Hall does not neglect to quote, charged Bismarck with having "left behind him a nation without any form of political education". The great modern authors of the Second Reich must acknowledge the force of such criticisms.

Alex Hall is a faithful disciple of this self-censoring school of German historians, but, lacking its subtlety and their experience, he has produced a caricature of a

healthy, if highly debatable, point of view. He does have imagination: on the first page, Hall refers to a recently rediscovered "trusty" by Eckart Kohr, the intellectual godfather of German sociological historians. Actually, Wehler edited Kehr's posthumous collection of articles and entitled them "Der Primat der Innerpolitik". There is no treasure. More serious are the sweeping general judgments that, in Hall's mind, sum up the Second Reich. Thus he speaks, in words appropriate to the DDR perhaps but not to the Wilhelmine Empire, of the "crushing" of the "autocratic rule" under which the state "moved into the twentieth century". For all the harassment of Social Democratic speakers and intermittent attempts to shock the Social Democratic press, for which Hall provides some choice instances, German socialists had abundant opportunities to express their views and rally their supporters. A crushing autocratic rule would scarcely have permitted the SPD to grow into the nation's strongest political party and to the elections of 1912, in which almost 35 per cent of the total vote and 110 seats in the Reichstag.

Again, Hall takes an incident of 1890, in which "some 500 supporters of a Social Democratic candidate, who had come to campaign on his behalf", and were "forcibly driven out of a village near Berlin by a gang of enraged farmers and 'Innkeepers'". In view of the weight that the term "organized terror" has years, the phrase that "a recent into Italian should have served Hall to moderate his language. All this is come-calling, not analysis.

Yet again, Hall finds it necessary to single out Imperial Germany as a society "glaring with social and political inequalities" and offers evidence that in 1913 higher officials of the state still continued to earn seven times as much as an unskilled labourer. The gap is wide and, I agree, unfortunate, but it was by no means peculiar to Imperial Germany either in its own time or in ours, as a rapid calculator of wages in present-day societies will show. Given such notions, it is scarcely surprising that Hall should arrive at the conclusion that "the SPD press and indeed the Social

Democratic movement as a whole were only as radical and effective as the bourgeoisie allowed them to be". This is a halfhearted truth: that various German governments surrounded SPD meetings and publications with vexatious interference and hampered them with arbitrary restrictions; militant socialists chafed under what they rightly denounced as "patriotic justice". But the most effective brakes on Social Democratic radicalism were internal ones: the "trade union consciousness" of organized labour, the wide and fairly influential current of thought, Revisionism, which was the child neither of cowardice nor of compromise, but of mature reflection on political, social, and economic developments. Hall, of course, knows about Edmund Bernstein's Revisionism, but in his eagerness to portray the Empire as a sink of corruption and on engine of repression he blows the state for the moderation of Social Democrats when the responsibility rests, in large measure, with Social Democrats themselves. The rhetoric and the policies of Wilhelm II and his powerful coadjutors were madly irritating and, especially in the later years of his reign, dangerously irresponsible, but the force of good sense, of liberalism, of enlightened moderation were by no means impotent, let alone absent, in those years.

Despite these faults, Hall's survey of the Social Democratic press in those decline years before the outbreak of World War I is far from useless. He repeats the language of law and editors had to confront and combat at every turn; he charts some of the police and with municipal authorities. And his long list of chapters, on the financial and sexual scandals in high places that Social Democratic newspapers either uncovered or followed, entangled in court cases, journalists, doled to report, reveals some juicy, politically significant stories—outlets the scandal surrounding the homosexual adventures and probable suicide of Fritz Kapp. They are by and large familiar stories, but Hall brings them together and describes them and the complex attitude of the Social Democratic press toward them, with agreeable economy.

diet-Jan Parr's analysis of the peasant radicalism which emerged in the 1890s. The same peasants—damned wrongly and for too long by Marx, as backward objects of history—could organize both militarism and avant-garde culture and could support both protection and a more democratic franchise; they were even capable, on occasion, of bouts of anti-clericalism.

Major themes which recur include a convincing challenge to the assumption that Imperial Germany's ruling class manifested other notions of society, especially for their own purposes, and its corollary of lower middle-class, peasant and working-class docility or apathy. And the inadequacies of an analysis of society which treats Germany and Prussia as ideologues are well shown up by the contributions dealing with the southern states. This is closely allied to the prominence given in several of the essays to the Centre Party, shamefully neglected by historians no doubt because, as Richard Evans says, it conveniently failed to "fit" most of the generalizations which have become commonplace about the Wilhelmine political system. But the irony is that, in the so-called "united" Germany, where Protestant Prussia dominated, it was the Catholic Centre which was the key political party. David Blackbourn's incisive description of the Centre Party, the Centre Party from the defunct Kulturkampf to the through "the decentralization" to become a genuine and left party with clear economic and social policies, revises the view that has written it off as an opportunist confession of defeat.

Rebellion is also due to Chancellor Bismarck, argues Terry Cole in a meticulously documented, 1905 pp. The publisher, and it is advised that in which Wilhelm II used—and allowed others to abuse—rarely limited authority, by

sueded Bismarck that the only way to curb the Kaiser's power.

But again and again it is to the old chestnut of "continuity in German history from Bismarck to Hitler (or later)" that we return, in spite of the editor's repeated pleas for looking at Wilhelmine Germany for its own sake. For those who never swallowed this fashionable theory whole, some of the conclusions reached here will seem less than remarkable. But Geoff Eley re-creates the disenchanted, the blinkered and selective views of the holders of "cultural despair" and the pseudo-psychologists of the "German Mind" as well as showing through on analysis of the petty-bourgeoisie—that the German right pulled off so many survival tricks in the twentieth century precisely because it allowed itself to adapt to changing circumstances.

Few readers will be surprised to learn that there were deep differences of political view within the middle class, or that workers often went on strike for bread-and-butter, not political reasons—or that national leaders of the working class often did not represent their members' views. But there is much that is new, stimulating and convincing. This is an important book.

Two bulky volumes of conference papers in the series "German History" have so far appeared: the first, *Theorie der Geschichte I: Objektivität und Parteilichkeit* (edited by Reinhart Koselleck, published by Suhrkamp, 1977, DM 16.80), focusing on questions of objectivity/engagement in liberal and Marxist historiography (Rast and West). The second, *Historische Prozesse* (edited by Kurt Müller, published by Suhrkamp, 1977, DM 16.80), dealing with the history of the German Empire in specific periods.

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Classes without community

R. J. Evans

SAGARRA: The History of Germany 1648-1945. Methuen. £15.

social history is a study very old and very new. Its roots are in the history of reference: Hegel's civilizationalism; the rise of the bourgeoisie; the impact of the industrial revolution and the rise of the working class.

In the circumstances there is plenty of scope for an external standpoint, and English-language writing has made solid contributions to the field. Most of it has been American, stimulated by émigré scholars like Hans Rosenberg, an outstanding example is Meek Welker's portrayal of the decay of provincial urban communities in middle Germany in the face of state intervention and new market forces. Now, for the first time, the English reader can gain an overall view, from Eda Sagarra, Professor of German in Dublin. Her purpose is to summarize the state of research into German society between the Peace of Westphalia and the First World War, and to mesh together the wealth of new papers. Through-out her extended and attractive text she also makes intelligent use of autobiographies, memoirs, and some literary sources.

In the first part of the book Professor Sagarra surveys the ancient régime in the Holy Roman Empire. She profits from the sympathetic reappraisal of its institutions and its general coherence which historians are at present undertaking; she points to the distinctive features of German Baroque culture, by no means just the "baroque" version of the Italian which outsiders have often presumed to discern; she observes how Platonism might prove a solvent of class attitudes. Yet many negative factors remain: society appears provincial, intolerant, illiterate, ill-equipped. Most towns were still medieval, most towns were still medieval, most towns were still medieval.

The second and longer part of the analysis covers the nineteenth century; again we have a sequence of chapters on the various classes of society, again the story of a pro-

gressive inability to adapt. The uncles soon resorted themselves after their Napoleonic disarray; Protestant Churches struck official positions, while Catholicism, though possessing more of the common touch, was pressed into illiberal positions by Bismarck's Kulturkampf and its sense of insecurity in the new Reich. The bourgeoisie came to subsume its political ambitions in the national movement, civil servants and teachers were obsessed by status, entrepreneurs grew increasingly conservative in their political stance. On the other side stood the losers: artisans tended to decline, unless able to retrain themselves as a labour aristocracy; peasants were condemned to insignificance; a factory working-class gradually acquired solidarity as it forfeited self-esteem; Jews were not fully accepted into established society for all the manifold activities in which they engaged. And large numbers of people remained beyond the pale altogether: paupers and servants, and most women, held in an implacably in a position of gross inferiority.

Professor Sagarra is well aware of the shortage of material for generalization—or, ironically, the substantiating regional divergences which are a most obvious barrier to any generalization. She writes effectively on some neglected

university, especially sociology of religion (but for nothing does the latest dictionary of German national history still assign a prominent place wherever possible to confessional allegiances). Elsewhere she does not quite deliver: the book is too perfunctory about such German writers as Heinrich Heine, even about peasant society, even about the role of the bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth century. Yet the paucity of recent writing might have been supplemented by the insights of authors as diverse as Saur and Schmitzer.

And the book betrays a larger immaturity of its subject. It mirrors all the attention paid to economic interest groups and the snail-drawings and conflicts they engender. This is certainly very important, whether the snail-drawings are in society or in the history of social relationships, not economic ones, and we find much less study of institutions, from parliaments, civic bodies, and professional

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Wishing away the past

By Gertrud Mander

PETER HÄRTLING:
Hubert
389pp. Darmstadt: Luchterhand.
DM32.

GABRIELE WOHMANN:
Frühberst in Badenweiler
270pp. Darmstadt: Luchterhand.
DM28.

PAUL KERSTEN:
Der alltägliche Tod meines Vaters
100pp. Cologne: Klempner und
Witsch.

Peter Härtling's Hubert is a German Walter Mitty, minus the humour. Having had a father who helped in the killing of the Jews in his capacity of SS Sturmabführer, Hubert has only two choices: either stepping into his father's footsteps like his older brother who gets killed in the war, or inventing a new and better life for himself. He takes the latter course and models himself on film stars, first on Hans Albers, then on Humphrey Bogart—hence the subtitle "Return to Casablanca"—that, trenchant, stilted casualness and all.

Fantasy takes over whenever Hubert's life becomes too stressful. His father's desertion of the family in the late 1930s, problematic sexual encounters in adolescence and as a young soldier in occupied Czechoslovakia, difficulties with superiors and with military and political adventures, and later, back in civilian life, as financial whizkid of a prestigious daily newspaper, finally his marriage to an ambitious career woman—all these experiences force Hubert to abandon his true self and hide behind his imaginary persona, more or less convincingly.

Härtling's hero evidently represents a whole generation of Germans who are emotionally crippled by their disowned past. Efficient Americanization; it is implied, is the attempted cover-up for a shameful past which can never be forgiven or forgotten. It is a past wished away or glossed over, never integrated or likely to be. Hubert's double life is no solution, since fantasy produces depersonalization, while reality yields shame and flight. Härtling's own response is that mixture of self-pity and self-hatred which is characteristic of much modern German literature and stems from the Expressionists.

The Hubert in Gabriele Wohmann's *Frühberst in Badenweiler* is very different. He also is middle-aged, yet nothing is said about his childhood or his parents, though in his case too they belong to the dark period of Germany's recent past. Wohmann chooses instead to plot a detailed map of his internal world, which is that of an artist crippled by a serious life crisis. The echoes here are of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* and *Death in Venice*. The former because of the setting, Badenweiler, a spa in South Germany where the chronically ill and the psychically ill meet to take the waters and repeat their aimless, reckless living. The latter because of the creative crisis which has

fallen hero Hubert in the midst of a successful career as a composer. In 1934 the biology master, writing letters to relatives, friends, colleagues and employers, but only in his mind; he thinks up a number of impossible projects (essays on precipitation, a biography of Schubert), registers the minutest mental decay, examines his career and highly praised compositions in the light of the classics and of eternity and finds them wanting, remembers his past loves and his present marital problems (to divorce or not to divorce, that is the question), forgets himself in front of the television set, enjoys the set routine of Park Hotel and Kurhaus, the gentle scenery of woods and meadows, and becomes himself.

The outside world is held at arm's length; occasionally it breaks in, as when Hubert listens to the news (it is the autumn of 1977 when the terrorists struck at the foundations of the German state), or when Selma breezes in, chain smoking, aroused to an important interview, telling Hubert what he should do.

Yet there are no more than ripples. Hubert, alias Hans Castorp, alias Aschenbach, lives in an enchanted world of self-absorption and introspection so intense that nobody and nothing reaches him. Finally, wanting and catching a mouse and dealing with the little creature—one of those sensitive lyrical vignettes Wohmann is so good at—he decides to change his life. The how and what of this remains open, but this Hubert has certainly a better chance of becoming himself than Härtling's.

Paul Kersten's autobiographical novel describes the crisis he experienced after his father's long-drawn-out death from cancer. He was never close or congenial, yet he was central to Kersten's life as oral father to all sons. The narrator refuses to seal his father's corpse, but he is soon haunted by dream images of the dead man and by painful memories which are set off at the sight of quite trivial objects associated with him.

Kersten shows that grief about an irreparable loss is inevitably intertwined with grief about the missed opportunities for closeness, for honesty, love, and self-fulfilment. In retrospect this dead father's life is a life that never really took off both because the times were bad—the Nazis, the war, the dark post-war struggle for survival—and because his own never found out how it could have been properly lived. He found no satisfaction in work, in marriage, in family life or play; like so many people, he had missed an expected development of feeling and thought which finally led to the denial of fatal illness and impending death. The 800 mourns his dead father, suffers an imaginary death himself, and then, reconstructing and almost connecting this life-story, receives his own life, reflected back again. The son's simple yet lyrical account gives a simple dignity to a truly ordinary life. It is this ordinariness and particularity which make the life relevant to the miserable and uneventful life and his passive and painful death ultimately so moving.

Breaking out

JUREK BECKER:
Schlaflose Tage
157pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM20.

The "sleepless days" of Jurek Becker's new novel are experienced by a thirty-six-year-old East German schoolteacher, Karl Simrock, who suddenly wakes up to the fact that his life is slipping by all too conventionally. He is a "lucky" man: traces withdrawn from his marriage, loses his job and ends up, not unhappily, as a hacket's roundman.

This behaviour cannot, however, be dismissed simply as a premature onset of the mole mania, for the story makes it clear that the cause of Simrock's unrest lies in the social and political environment of the German Democratic Republic. For too long he has had his thoughts and attitudes headed down from above, accepting the role imposed on him by the state as a passive purveyor of the Party line. Not only has this turned him into a bad teacher, concerned to shield his pupils from doubt and critical ques-

own personal development.

His actions are both a protest against a system whose highest virtue is conformity and also an attempt to "discover" his own identity. He is therefore a German who ever-lengthening line of East German literary characters from Christa Wolf's Christa T. onwards, who, while being fundamentally in sympathy with the GDR's Marxist beliefs, are deeply disturbed by the use of dehumanizing manifestations.

But *Schlaflose Tage* is no crusading tract. Its ironic style reflects the self-defeating unpretentiousness with which Simrock embarks on his new life-style, and the whole book is permeated by the quiet irony and delectable understated humour which are characteristic of its author. But this gently amusing, low-key story was apparently too strong for the publisher, who decided to publish the book only in East Germany, where, Jurek Becker, until the Biermann affair in 1976 himself a member of the Party, left the country at the end of last year.

Peter Grayes

For survival's sake

By Sheila Stern

VALENTIN SENER:
Kaiserhofstrasse 12
304pp. Darmstadt: Luchterhand.
DM32.

Valentin Senger's autobiographical novel appears ordis, which is a good thing in the telling of such an extraordinary story. His parents were Russian Jews, Yiddish-speakers, who entered Germany (illegally in 1917, lived at Kaiserhofstrasse 12 in Frankfurt and were never rounded up by the Nazis. Frau Senger, a communist, died of heart-disease in 1944, and the younger brother was killed in 1945 in the Eastern Front, but when the war ended the father and a sister, Paula, were still alive. Apart from certain pieces of fantastic luck this was the achievement of the mother, who decided, not very easily on to believe as if they were not Jewish, and forced this presence upon the rest of the family as their only hope of survival.

One of the most remarkable chapters describes the consequences of Valentin's determination that his mother should be buried in Frankfurt, though she died when the heavy bombing had resulted in their temporarily living many miles away. Defying a host of emergency regulations, he accompanied her coffin to the main cemetery of Frankfurt in a horse-drawn hearse, and in an uncharacteristic mood of self-assurance got his way with a kindly official there. On the long nerve-racking drive Valentin holds on to imaginary conversation with his dead mother, in which for the first time he finds himself utterly reassured by his upbringing as a coward and a liar under the burden of her constant plea, "It's only for the sake of surviving, Velya".

The portraits of various teachers

Competition corner

By K. S. Parkes

MARTIN WALSER:
Elio Kleheodes Pferd
150pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM17.80.

Martin Walser has often been accused by his detractors of writing novels without form and plays without plot. It is therefore surprising that he should now for the first time write a novella, the genre which, as all students of German literature know, demands a single narrative marked by an extraordinary incident. The extraordinary incident is that the staid middle-aged schoolmaster Elio Kleheodes causes his old school and university friend Klaus Buch to fall from his yacht and apparently drown during a sailing trip on Lake Constance.

Hahn is a man who has more than accepted the limitations of middle age. He is settled in his career, has spent his summer holidays in the same holiday cottage for eleven years, makes few demands on his wife and finds solace in the pleasure of alcohol and tobacco. By contrast, Klaus Buch, whom he now meets for the first time since their accident days, retains all the attributes of youth. He has divorced his first wife and married a much younger woman, still indulges in various sporting activities, smokes and drinks, and writes books on ecology and related modern topics. When the two couples are taking

under National Socialism are only vignettes, but they are unforgettable. In 1934 the biology master, setting the style for the new era, gives the class as homework the construction of a family tree. When Valentin's mother cried "Mazelov!" (congratulations) and set down to invent a genealogy of Volks German, complete with names, dates and children and their father through numerous apparent impostures to the end of the war. As domestic life was also a great success, and Valentin was declared to have the pure Aryan Dinaric type.

Both boys and their father were employed from 1940 in war work, and there is a compelling account of the seventy-year-old man's time-lapse of a group of Russian women slave-workers in an armaments factory. Valentin and his brother were called up till 1944. During all this time there were many hairbreadth escapes, but Valentin was never exposed to physical mistreatment, not indeed to real suspicion, until the liberation, when he was severely beaten up by American soldiers. In describing this episode he summons up the collective dream of liberation his family had sometimes whispered to each other.

They would ask "Why are you?" and we'd say "We are Jews". And they'd say "What? You? You have to say it louder!" and we'd say "We are Jews!" and we'd say "We are saved!" and we'd dance in the street, you, Mama, Papa, Paula, Alex and I, till we fell down with exhaustion.

This is a brilliant evocation of the terrible suppression of identity. Senger refers to many times, and which perhaps explains his long delay in setting all this down. It must be added that as well as giving us a portrait of his upbringing as a coward and a liar under the burden of her constant plea, "It's only for the sake of surviving, Velya".

a walk and are confronted with a horse running wild. Klaus jumps on to his back and brings it to heel. Helmut is finally so provoked by his friend's recklessness on this sailing trip that he grabs the tiller and causes Klaus to fall.

This story, then, contrasts in attitudes to middle age. Yet both must like the horse of the tide, seeking to escape. Helmut is a young man, the demands of life, while Klaus's youthfulness is only a facade that covers up a deep insecurity. The man of nature is not, for instance, bear the heat of the sun; he lets out a shriek of anguish whenever it is a shame to him. Helmut, perhaps too explicitly after his accident, believing him to be drowned, his wife, under the increasing influence of school, reveals the truth to the Helms. His success as a writer has only been achieved after long unproductive hours of the typewriter and countless rows with publishers. She has had to sacrifice his own career as a musician to his good wife. She is a victim, as Helmut is, of male passivity, indeed as many of male passivity, indeed as many of Walser's female characters are. When Klaus returns from the desert, the couple's part, Helmut and Klaus, avoiding each other's eyes. How much things will change now for either couple is left uncertain by the story's open conclusion.

There is some of Walser's more times, a criticism of the German society in this work. At the same time, the events do seem as an over-competitive society.

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The machine versus the eye

By Hans Schmoller

The idea of chancing and exhibiting the best-produced art "must be beautiful" books irrespective of content may strike some people as nihil, even perverse. Yet there is now a long tradition of exhibitions of book design and production, of the first international one was probably that which took place at the "Bücher" in Leipzig, in 1925. Since the 1920s such exhibitions have become regular events in a growing number of countries. In the United States there has been a kind of schism: the American Institute of Graphic Arts has come in for heavy criticism at the way it recently ran its "Fifty Books" exhibition—it has been accused of being too strongly influenced by Madison Avenue—and the university presses appoint their own jury to make a selection from their annual production. Gradually the emphasis has shifted from books as works of art to books as products of industrial design.

If the size and standing of the jury for a book exhibition were a measure of its importance, Britain's National Book League exhibition, with its three different selectors each year—not always widely known for outstanding achievements or expertise—would be well down the line. There are no firm guidelines for the selectors and there is no continuity of criteria: one year's judges don't know how the previous year's will do theirs. This number of books exhibited has varied from fifty to over 140 in the past twenty years or so, and so at least one occasion—admittedly more than a hundred books don't make a show. If there is not enough space to go round, as there is in the last-mentioned, small wonder perhaps that by now the annual exhibition at the NBL is treated perfunctorily by some publishers and ignored altogether by others. Regrettably, its influence on book-making would seem to be negligible.

Elsewhere book exhibitions are taken more seriously, and nowhere more so than in Germany. East and West. The high standards of book production which was achieved again soon after the war certainly seem to do with the ambition of German publishers in complete with each other. In this field, though there are no outright winners or prizes at the exhibitions, only the prestige of inclusion.

For West Germany's exhibition, "Die Kunst der Bücher", books are selected by a jury of twelve which meets for four days each spring at the Stiftung Buchkunst in Frankfurt, a small body supported by the German publishing industry and the German Publishers' Association (Bund der Deutschen Verleger und Buchhändler). The Bund der Deutschen Verleger und Buchhändler, with the City of Frankfurt as its sponsor. Only four of the twelve members are from the publishing industry; the rest are specialists in the field of book design and production. This year there were two publishers, three design managers, a journalist, a typographer, a printer, a bookbinder, a bookseller and a librarian. The twelfth member comes from abroad (in 1978 from England). This is a recently established custom.

The four-day session is prepared by the immense staff by the secretariat and a short-listing jury of three, while not permitted to eliminate any of the nearly 500 books submitted, draws attention to specific shortcomings in any of them. Even in four days it would be impossible for each juror to look at all aspects of the design and production of so large a number of books, and therefore all are divided into four groups, each of which is further divided into sub-groups, not so much by subject as by type, so that a bibliophile edition or a purely visual book, for instance, does not come directly with a technical text, or a scientific treatise.

Each juror then awards points to the books in his group. When these are added together, a pre-

Perhaps a quarter or a third survive the first round, but only just. The jury then holds a final selection of their 160 books or so, which are expected to cast more than a fleeting glance at those in the other groups. Everybody is entitled to move books from "below" to "above" the line, but not vice versa.

From then on the jury sits as a whole, and soon things begin to warm up. Strangely held views are sharply attacked and stubbornly defended. Innovation as such is its advocate, but so has good workmanship. Good human work prevails, but everyone takes part with extraordinary commitment. Borderline cases are discussed at length, and sometimes voted on. By gradual and often regretful elimination the year's elite is at least agreed on the fourth morning, just before the Vorstand and the press arrive for the closing formalities.

What of the result of this exhaustive and exhausting procedure? In technical respects the criteria are objective and severe and standards correspondingly high. Offset printing has almost completely superseded letterpress. The quality is such that what used to be a star performance is now almost the norm. As in America, but not in Britain, great care is taken that books open and handle well by ensuring that the paper grain runs along, and not across the page: a book that fails in this respect stands little chance of getting into the "Fifty".

In the most important matter of composition, German books, however, like English and American, are suffering from the headlong rush into filmsetting. Suddenly, five hundred years of skill and experience in such subtleties as type size in relation to its weight, or the amount of space there should be between characters, have given way to cathode-ray tubes, electronic grids of varying inadequacy, and this rigidity of photographic enlargement and reduction. The results are often patently inferior in human terms. A book which is a masterpiece of type and layout might refuse to buy filmset type, but would end up with a hopelessly inspired library; only one-third of the German "Fifty" are still set in the old way. To disqualify

indifferently filmset books would result in an absurdly truncated selection, and all the jury can do is to plead that manufacturers and designers should become more discriminating in their selection of type.

The best German typography and book design are, it is true, still to be found in the hands of individual designers, but not always free from fashionable mannerisms. The means of articulating by different type sizes and by forming clear groups, for instance, in titles, are often shunned in favour of formalistic "patterns" unrelated to meaning and structure. Irredeemable display types are still out of fashion, but everyone takes part with extraordinary commitment. Borderline cases are discussed at length, and sometimes voted on. By gradual and often regretful elimination the year's elite is at least agreed on the fourth morning, just before the Vorstand and the press arrive for the closing formalities.

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In recent years the usefulness of such catalogues as a source of information has been given a new dimension by the researches at the University of Cambridge. It was through his painstaking efforts that an account of Sir Thomas Phillipps, and the strange man's immense collection of books and manuscripts, that Dr Munby came to be recognized not merely as an authority on Phillipps but on the whole history of the book trade, particularly in the nineteenth century.

To those of us who had the privilege of working with him, his detailed knowledge of bookellers and book auctioneers, their catalogues and their patrons, bordered on the incredible. A permanent repository of every new sale he discovered was an interleaved copy of Phillipps's work of 1916 in which he entered all those catalogues which the British Museum lacked. A copy of this was deposited in the Museum in 1955. By 1968 Dr Munby had already discovered a further 583 catalogues and he continued to add to these until his death three years ago.

Thus the present work is very much his brain child which has been devotedly taken to completion by his collaborator, Laurence Cord. Though it covers only the period 1676 to 1800, and thus omits the final hundred years included by Phillipps, the number of catalogues listed in the relevant period has been increased by at least one third.

Miss Cord introduces the work with a long and not altogether clear explanation of the basis on which the revised catalogue has been constructed. It remains marvellously useful to have this Union List in its present, very reasonably priced form, and it is to be hoped that Miss Cord and her publishers will supply us with a further volume taking the list up to 1900, or perhaps 1950.

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